MEC, MLEC, Saipan-Guam Eagles District install new officers. PAGE 2
SHS offers tips, solutions to keep pets safe during New Year. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Last Friday, the CNMI government and Suwaso Corp. had a spontaneous lease agreement signing at the Governor's Office on Capitol Hill that made official Coral Ocean Resort's new lease agreement.

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MONDAY DECEMBER 30, 2024
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COR new lease now official

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI government and Suwaso Corp. dba Coral Ocean Resort have officially finalized and signed the new COR lease agreement as of last week.

After over two weeks of back and forth, Suwaso Corp. and the CNMI government have finally come to terms with the details of the new COR lease and it ended last week with a spontaneous lease agreement signing at the Governor's Office on Capitol Hill.

See COR on Page 4

Kilili wants US District Court for NMI judge to have lifetime term

» **Delegate says CUC receives $1.91M in earmarks for water, wastewater projects.**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
delatorreferdie@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has introduced a legislation that proposes the

See KILILI on Page 4

Sablan

District Court orders detention for man accused of threatening chief judge

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio has ordered that the man who was arrested for allegedly threatening to assault and kidnap U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona remain detained.

Last Thursday, a detention hearing was held for Edward Gene Worswick Richards, the

See COURT on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Delegate-elect Kimberlyn King-Hinds visited the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. during her listening tour in advance of her swearing-in cereemony as the CNMI's delegate to U.S. Congress this Jan. 3.

King-Hinds concludes listening tour, sets stage for swearing-in

As the year draws to a close, delegate-elect Kimberlyn King-Hinds has wrapped up an extensive listening tour across the CNMI, meeting with key leaders, agencies, and institutions to prepare for her upcoming role in the 119th U.S. House of Representatives. These sessions provided valuable insights

See KING-HINDS on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
In the true spirit of the season, Bank of Guam is proud to announce a $20,000 donation to four nonprofit organizations through its annual Employee Give Initiative.

PAGE 9

WORLD
Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologized to his Azerbaijani counterpart for what he called a "tragic incident" following the crash of an Azerbaijani airliner in Kazakhstan that killed 38 people, but stopped short of acknowledging that Moscow was responsible.

PAGE 10

LIFE & STYLE
Olivia Hussey, the actor who starred as a teenage Juliet in the 1968 film "Romeo and Juliet," has died, her family said on social media Saturday. She was 73.

PAGE 9

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

MEC, MLEC, Saipan-Guam Eagles District install new officers

By RACQUEL H. FLOYD
raxfloyd@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Marianas Eagles, Marianas Lady Eagles Clubs, and Saipan-Guam Eagles District welcomed new officers for the Eagle Year 2025 last Saturday night at Aqua Resort Club.

The Saipan-Guam Eagle District installed governor Edmin A. Elayda along with Chris B. Manalo as vice district governor, Fernando E. Enano as district secretary, Carlos E. Eslaban Jr. as district treasurer, Raul V. Abordonado as district auditor, Peter R. Crisostomo as district information officer, Danny Banez, Danny R. Robles, and Arvin Ian S. Sales as district tribunal officers, protocol officers Nazareno P. Ortiz Jr. and Elmar Magno, and election officers Leo P. Canedo and Marcelo V. Masilungan.

The Marianas Eagles Club's new president is Junar "Bong" C. Sulabo, while the other new officers are Danny R. Robles as vice president, Larry C. Pangilinan as secretary, Carlos E. Eslaban Jr. as treasurer Raul V. Abordonado as auditor, Alvin

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Newly installed Marianas Eagle Club president Junar "Bong" Sulabo Jr. during his acceptance speech for during the installation of officers for Eagle Year 2025 last Saturday night at Aqua Resort Club.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Newly installed Saipan-Guam Eagles District governor Edmin Elayda during his acceptance speech.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Group photo of the Marianas Eagles Club and Lady Eagles Club that concluded the installation of officers' ceremony.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Lady Eagle Irene L. Marquez was installed as the new president of Marianas Lady Eagles Club with Connie N. Quidato as vice president, Elena M. Enriquez as secretary, Gemma M. Eugenio as treasurer, Josefina C. Camacho as auditor, Rowena V. Coloma and Donata U. Fronda as club PRO, Norlyn P. Cabrera, Leilani M. Catungal, Mary Grace I. Cruz, Leilani A. Garcia, Marilou P. Masilungan, and Mildred M. Pabilando as board of directors, Malaya C. Magno as club comelec chairman, Roxanne R. Layugan and Aurelia F. Costales as comelec members, Elenita P. Duarte as club care chairman, and Crisanta Alvarez as alternate district representative.

D. Buendia as club press relation officer, Arvin Ian S. Sales as protocol officer, and Peter R. Crisostomo as club alternate district representative.

Lady Eagle Irene L. Marquez was installed as the new president of Marianas Lady Eagles Club with Connie N. Quidato as vice president, Elena M. Enriquez as secretary, Gemma M. Eugenio as treasurer, Josefina C. Camacho as auditor, Rowena V. Coloma and Donata U. Fronda as club public relations officers, Norlyn P. Cabrera, Leilani M. Catungal, Mary Grace I. Cruz, Leilani A. Garcia, Marilou P. Masilungan, and Mildred M. Pabilando as board of directors, Malaya C. Magno as club comelec chairman, and Roxanne R. Layugan and Aurelia F. Costales as Comelec members, Elenita P. Duarte as club care chairman, and Crisanta Alvarez as alternate district representative.

According to the past district governor Marcelo V. Masilungan, the installation of officers was scheduled for the yearend to align with the start of the Eagle Year on Jan. 1, 2025.

"We schedule the installation this month since the Eagle Year is a calendar year, so that when Jan. 1 comes, all elected officers can really fully function according to their position and not be called with their position elect," he said.

The program started with the acknowledgment of guests and members by Fernando Enano where he extended his gratitude to past district governor Masilungan and discussed the organization's journey that involved overcoming challenges and building upon past successes.

Meanwhile, Masilungan shared some advice by giving emphasis on the importance of collaborative efforts while highlighting the need to listen to all members' needs and responding kindly to negativity.

"My advice to the officers and members of Saipan-Guam Eagles District, Marianas Eagles Club, and Marianas Lady Eagles Club is to ensure the work collaboratively, and always listen to what your members' needs, not just selected individuals. Jesus taught us that if someone throws a stone at us, then we should throw back bread," said Masilungan.

Elayda, in his speech, expressed his gratitude for the team's efforts and dedication and mentioned prioritizing values of compassion, resilience, and humility in leadership as he emphasizes collaborative work with various groups and a spirit of unity.

"Compassion and resilience, I will lead with humility and listen to your concerns and ideas and working collaboratively with other groups or clubs," said Elayda.

Marianas Eagle Club president Sulabo discussed in his speech about the group being bound by a shared mission to create a positive community impact that despite challenges, the group's integrity and commitment remain strong and that future goals and continued encouragement were emphasized.

"We all have differences, we may encounter arguments, and contradicting opinions, but one thing we always remember as Eagles, is we gather not to be divided but to keep our plans as *kuya* and *ate* and to make our fellowship alive and intact. Our integrity and commitment are for serving others. We are not just a group, we are a family bound by a shared mission of making positive impacts in our communities, in our society," he said.

Marquez, in her acceptance speech, mentioned commitment to strengthening the group and dedication to fulfilling the role's responsibilities and that the success of the group is attributed to hard work, determination, sacrifice, and the investment of time and resources.

"Yes, I accept to be the president of the Marianas Lady Eagles Club for the Eagle Year 2025, but a single head achieves nothing. So, I'm counting on your support to achieve our success. As you've said 'we will support you,' and we will not leave you. This is truly a moment to be honored and cherished. I accept this position with pride and will give my best efforts to make our stronger and better with the grace of our God and the cooperation of fellow members," she said.

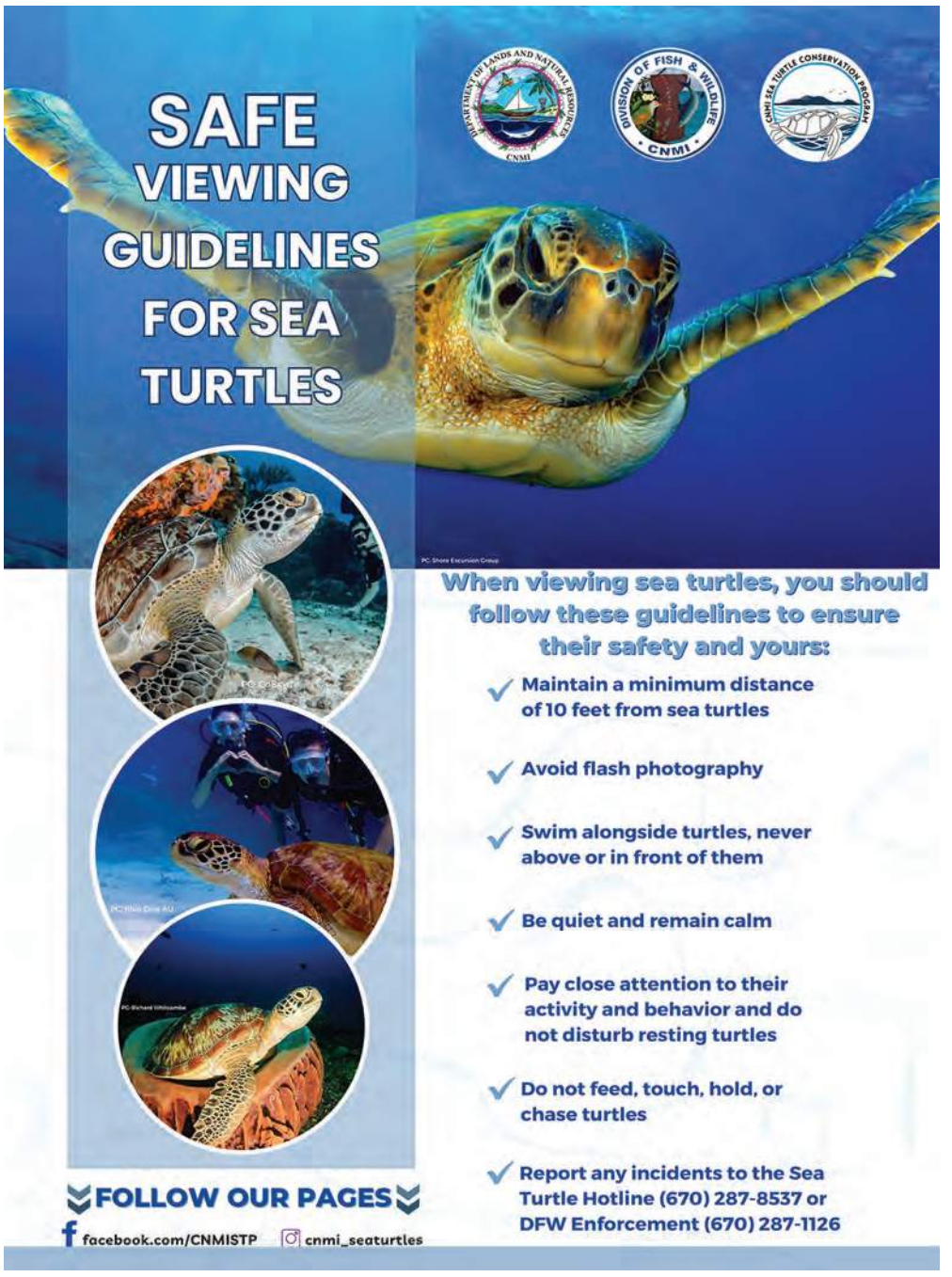
Charter president of Marianas Lady Eagles Club, Mildred Pabilando, in her impromptu speech, thanked all the members and previous officers for all the support that was given to her during her almost two-year term.

The installation ceremony was virtually facilitated by the outgoing Fraternal Order of Eagles National president Jeffrey Maravilla with Gio Delos Santos.

Maravilla, in his special message, encouraged the group to extend its support to the incoming national president-elect Mark Limpin and reminded them to include in the calendar of events the Women's Month and Eagles Week.

Regional district governor Bernard Lim was not able to join the ceremony, but had his congratulatory message read by Peter Crisostomo wherein a new chapter of unity and service was discussed.

"A unified body can achieve great things through friendship and service to the community and the new chapter should focus on growth, purpose, and unity guided by wisdom and compassion," his message stated.


SAFE VIEWING GUIDELINES FOR SEA TURTLES
When viewing sea turtles, you should follow these guidelines to ensure their safety and yours:
Maintain a minimum distance of 10 feet from sea turtles
Avoid flash photography
Swim alongside turtles, never above or in front of them
Be quiet and remain calm
Pay close attention to their activity and behavior and do not disturb resting turtles
Do not feed, touch, hold, or chase turtles
Report any incidents to the Sea Turtle Hotline (670) 287-8537 or DFW Enforcement (670) 287-1126
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DPS: No serious incidents throughout Christmas holiday

Department of Public Safety assistant chief of police and acting public information officer Simon T. Manacop said there were no serious incidents reported to police throughout the Christmas holiday, from Dec. 24 to 26, 2024.

Mancop did say police entertained a total of 39 active cases during the period, with six persons arrested for disturbing the peace, assault and battery, illegal possession of a controlled substance, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

"Other than that, it was fairly a peaceful Christmas. No reports of gunshots or gun related violence. Hoping for a wonderful New Year for everyone," he said.

Scheduled DUI checkpoints

Meanwhile, DPS would like to inform the public that they will be conducting the following DUI sobriety check points.

Monday, Dec. 30, 2024

■ The first setup will be on Chalan Pale Arnold Puerto Rico to Garapan, from 7pm to 9pm.

■ Second setup will be along Chalan Monsignor Guererro Chalan Kiya to Dan Dan, from 9pm to 11:30pm.

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024

■ The first setup will be on Beach Road Susupe to Chalan Lau Lau, from 7pm to 9pm.

■ Second setup will be along Beach Road Chalan Lau Lau to Garapan, from 9pm to 10:30pm.

■ Third setup will be on Micro Beach Road, Garapan, from 10:30pm to 2am, Jan. 01, 2025.

In addition to these checkpoints, DPS Highway Patrol Division will conduct high visibility enforcement, saturation patrols, and speed enforcement at random locations around the island.

The purpose of these scheduled checkpoints is to deter, detect, and apprehend impaired drivers and promote public safety while increasing awareness of the dangers of driving while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or medication while on the island's roadways.

"DPS would also like to remind the public to have a safe and enjoyable holidays," the press release stated. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

NAP: Benefits picks up only on designated day of case number

Effective Jan. 2, 2025, all Nutrition Assistance Program recipients, including heads of household and/or authorized representatives, shall pick up benefits on the designated day of the case number. NAP said moving forward attachments will not be permitted. ***(PR)***

Judiciary limited hours of operation on Dec. 31

The Supreme Court said the Judiciary will close its facilities from 12pm to 5pm on Dec. 31, 2024 (New Year's Eve).

E-filing portals (File and ServeXpress, eRecording, and eCourt) will remain open during the holidays. Bail, family protection, emergency, and time-sensitive matters may be set consistent with applicable rules. Judiciary personnel may be activated for emergency and essential services.

Visit the Judiciary's website at www.NMIJudiciary.gov for court information. For additional information or inquiries, contact: Supreme Court clerks of court Judy T. Aldan at (670) 236-9716 and judy.aldan@NMIJudiciary.gov or Patrick V. Diaz at (670) 236-9783 and patrick.diaz@NMIJudiciary.gov or supreme.court@NMIJudiciary.gov. ***(PR)***

SHEFA application deadline on Feb. 28

To all new, ongoing, and returning applicants, Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance would like to inform you that our Spring 2025 applications will be available online on Dec. 1, 2024 and the deadline to apply and submit supporting documents is on Feb. 28, 2025.

For more information and updates you can check our Facebook page at Saipan SHEFA or give us a call at (670) 233-5995. ***(PR)***

Saipan PACT Act Registration and Community Call event next month

HONOLULU, Hawaii—VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS) will hold a PACT Act Registration and Community Call event at the Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Civic Center in Susupe. The event will take place at the following days and times:

■ 12pm-4pm (ChST) Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2024.

■ 8am-4pm (ChST) Thursday, Jan. 9, 2024.

■ 8am-4pm (ChST) Friday, Jan. 10, 2024.

The event will have member service representatives ready to enroll veterans who have never enrolled or those who have become newly eligible under the PACT Act. Veterans who are already enrolled may also come for health services such as diabetic foot checks, vaccines, and blood pressure checks. All veterans can come with health and benefits questions.

VAPIHCS will continue to make PACT Act enrollment a priority, as well as other community outreach events for those who are unable to come to one of our locations. For more information regarding VA health care in the pacific call: 1-800-MY-VA-411 1-800-698-2411. ***(PR)***

UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 3rd Quarter General Membership Meeting on December 30, 2024 from 9:00am to 11:00 am at the Center for Living Independently, Capitol Hill

AGENDA

I. **Call to Order**

II. **Roll Call**

III. **Review & Adoption of the Agenda of December 30, 2024**

IV. **Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of July 31, 2024**

V. **Old Business**
   a. **DIF Grant – CNMI TECH PIECS Update**

VI. **New Business**
   a. **Family Transition Symposium 2025**
   b. **Developmental Disabilities Month 2025**

VII. **Reports**
   a. **Chairperson**
   b. **State Plan Committee Chairperson**
   c. **Fiscal Committee Chairperson**
   d. **Executive Director**

VIII. **Miscellaneous**

IX. **Next Meeting**

X. **Adjournment**

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ Concepcion Ulloa
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total $273,990 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-25-009

SEWER MAIN AND MANHOLE REPLACEMENT/REHAB/UPGRADE PHASE II

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the construction of the Sewer Main and Manhole Replacement/Rehab/Upgrade Phase II in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of realignment and replacement of the existing 4-inch bypass sewer line in **Capitol Hill Village** along **Capitol Hill Road** with a new 8-inch PVC distribution main. The scope includes the installation of appurtenances, fittings, new manholes with accessories, and the rehabilitation and reconnection of existing manholes, including the replacement of their accessories. All work must be performed in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications, ensuring no disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) requires the project to be completed within three hundred sixty-five (365) calendar days from the date of contract award.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 23, 2024, at 10:00 AM(CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-25-009, SEWER MAIN AND MANHOLE REPLACEMENT/REHAB/UPGRADE PHASE II**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) January 16, 2025**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A *Bid Guarantee* of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidder. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (CHST) on December 30, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer at email joel.puyat@cucgov.org, and to Marcela Tenorio, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

SHS offers tips, solutions to keep pets safe during New Year

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

As the festive season approaches, Saipan Humane Society is stepping up its efforts to keep pets safe and calm during the loud and sometimes frightening holiday celebrations. With fireworks and lively gatherings becoming common, many pets can experience heightened stress and anxiety.

SHS is reminding pet owners that dogs, with their extraordinary hearing capabilities that are four times more sensitive than humans, are particularly vulnerable to the loud noises of fireworks during holiday festivities. Signs of stress in dogs include hiding, whining, panting, pacing, and destructive behavior.

To help alleviate this anxiety, SHS announces that their clinic is now offering Trazodone. SHS shared that Trazodone is a safe and effective medication designed to calm pets during noisy events. Administered every 12 hours, SHS said that Trazodone can help pets stay relaxed and avoid the adverse effects of holiday stress, and encourages interested pet owners to contact SHS for more information about this treatment option.

In addition to medication, SHS also suggests several strategies to create a stress-free environment for pets. In a press release yesterday, they shared tips that owner should never leave pets outside during fireworks and that keeping them indoors can significantly reduce exposure to loud noises.

They suggested to pet owners that should create a calm, safe space, like a quiet room with familiar items can provide comfort. They should also play calming music as soft tunes can help drown out external noises. Another recommendation was to provide favorite treats and toys as keeping pets occupied can divert their attention from the noise.

With these simple steps, SHS shared that community members can make a huge difference in ensuring our furry friends have a safe and peaceful holiday.

For more details on Trazodone and other pet care tips, reach out to SHS via email at clinic@saipanhumanesociety.org or by calling (670) 233-7387, appointments can also be made on http://www.saipanhumanesociety.org/.

COURT

From page 1

man accused of allegedly threatening to assault and kidnap U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Manglona.

During the hearing, Kim-Tenorio addressed the government's motion for order of detention pending trial.

After hearing argument from the U.S, government and Richards' defense attorney, Kim-Tenorio ordered that the defendant remain detained.

However, Richards' lawyer, Richard Miller, said he reserves the right to file a motion to amend the order of detention once the defendant's mother returns to Saipan.

After ruling on the motion, Kim-Tenorio reset Richards' preliminary hearing to Jan. 3.

The defendant was remanded back to the custody of the United States Marshals after the hearing.

Richards is currently facing charges of threatening to assault or murder a United States judge, in violation of Title 18 U.S.C § 115(a)(1)(B), and transmitting a threat to kidnap any person or threatening to injure the person of another in interstate or foreign commerce, in violation of Title 18 U.S.C § 875c.

During an initial appearance before Kim-Tenorio, the judge stated that threatening a federal judge carries a maximum sentence of three years and a $250,000 fine, while transmitting a threat to kidnap is punishable by up to five years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

KILILI

From page 1

term for a judge in the U.S. District Court for the NMI to be for lifetime instead of the current 10-year-term and is renewable.

Sablan also disclosed in his recent *e-kilili* newsletter that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. $1,919,504 in EPA Community Projects Grants funding.

Sablan said his legislation, H.R. 10443, or the Article III Judicial Independence Act, would provide the same protection from outside influence for the Marianas federal district court judge as federal judges elsewhere in America enjoy.

H.R. 10443 seeks to amend title 28, to "provide for a district court for the district of the Northern Mariana Islands." It was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

Sablan said H.R. 10443 converts the tenure of the U.S. District Court for the NMI judge from a 10-year term of office to service "during good behavior" as specified in Article III of the U.S. Constitution.

"With what is effectively a lifetime appointment federal judges do not have to think about how the decisions they make could harm their ability to be employed after they leave the bench or their chances to be reappointed for a subsequent 10-year term," the delegate said.

Sablan thanked the NMI Bar Association for its endorsement of his legislation. The NMI Bar Association believes that lifetime appointments for federal judges allow them to make decisions without worrying about how it may affect their ability to be re-appointed or employed after leaving the bench.

The U.S. District Court for the NMI was established by an act of the U.S. Congress in 1977, and the judges were originally appointed by the President to eight-year terms.

In 1984, an amendment changed the term length to 10 years.

While it is named a "district court" for the NMI, it is not an Article III court, as it was created in accordance with the power granted under Article IV of the U.S. Constitution.

Article III of the Constitution states that federal judges, also known as Article III judges, are appointed for life, unless they are impeached and removed from office.

Regarding EPA's $1.91-million grant to CUC, Sablan said it is for two earmarks that he had included in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill for fiscal year 2024. He said one earmark worth $959,752 will be used to equip drinking water wells within the Isley and Obyan well fields with additional Granular Activated Carbon filtration systems to reduce PFOA/PFAS concentrations to below maximum contaminant levels and provide further system performance monitoring.

The delegate said the second earmark provides $959,752 for the design and construction to remediate a three-million-gallon World War II era underground storage tank that collapsed at the Sadog Tasi Wastewater Treatment Plant.

COR

From page 1

Previously, *Saipan Tribune* learned that Suwaso had raised a few issues regarding some of the provisions of the joint resolution approved by the Legislature weeks earlier.

The issues were raised just hours before the official lease agreement signing scheduled for last Dec. 6.

Saipan Tribune has reached out to the Department of Public Lands and Suwaso Corp for a comment but to no avail.

However, E-Land Group, the mother-company of Suwaso Corp., is set to meet with media outlets today to address questions about the lease agreement signing with DPL.

Last Dec. 6, Coral Ocean Resort hosted a lease signing ceremony at the resort and invited dignitaries to partake in the momentous occasion.

However, a few minutes in, it was learned that the signing hit a snag, and the ceremony was cancelled to give the appropriate parties to iron out the issues.

In a statement from Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, he shared that he too was only made aware that the lease signing ceremony would not push through on his way to COR.

"I had just come back from Guam, and I was notified prior to going to COR that the final lease agreement was not going to be signed as they needed to get together again for more discussion. Now, we need to come back again to see if there's a possibility to solve the issues [raised] without have to go back to a joint session," he said.

Palacios explains that Suwaso had raised a few issues regarding some of the provisions.

Palacios had intervened and facilitated a conversation between all parties involve which seemed to have been productive.

Last month, 19 members of the House of Representatives and all nine members of the Senate voted in favor of passing Joint Session Resolution 23-2, a joint session resolution granting approval of the final draft lease agreement entered into between the Department of Public Lands and Suwaso Corp. dba Coral Ocean Resort.

The agreement is essentially another 40-year lease of the COR property with the option of a 15-year extension.

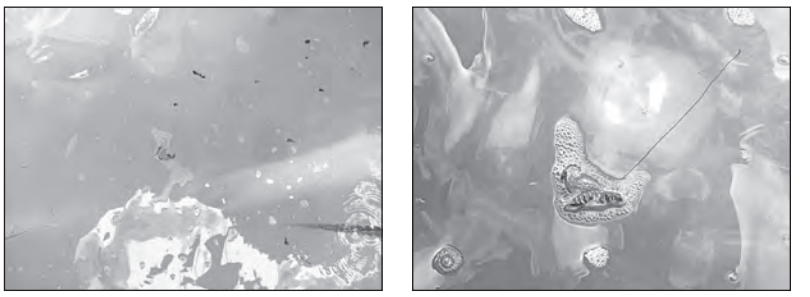
The version of the lease agreement passed includes a minor amendment in the benefit of $5,000 that Suwaso will pay annually to a scholarship program specifically for NMDs.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Suwaso was initially granted a 25-year land lease back in Feb. 10, 1986, with an option to extend it for 15 years, for a total of 40 years. After the initial lease expired in 2011, the company opted to avail of its 15-year extension. It is currently on its 38th year. The 15-year extension will expire in 2026.

Back in March, Suwaso proposed a new lease to allow COR to remain in operation for another 40 years.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

JELLYFISH WARNING



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/
The Division of Fish and Wildlife is cautioning the public to please exercise caution in the water and on shore as there have been reports of Portugese man o' war along Marine Beach and other areas around the island. DFW is warning people to please avoid contact.

KING-HINDS

From page 1

and opportunities to build partnerships that will guide efforts to address the CNMI's challenges and opportunities.

Over the past several weeks, King-Hinds engaged directly with stakeholders to hear their concerns, ideas, and aspirations for the future. Her tour included meetings with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios as well as representatives from the Department of Corrections, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Commonwealth Ports Authority, CNMI Medicaid Office, Marianas Visitors Authority, Northern Marianas College, Public School System, and the CNMI Department of Labor.

Adding to her packed schedule, King-Hinds delivered the keynote address to the CNMI cohort of the University of Guam's Master of Public Administration Program, calling for future leaders to take bold, thoughtful action in service of their communities.

"Listening to the voices of our leaders and institutions has been both enlightening and energizing," King-Hinds said. "These conversations have reaffirmed my belief that the solutions to our challenges lie in the strength of our people and the power of collaboration. The road ahead is complex, but together, we can pave the way for a stronger and more resilient CNMI."

From infrastructure to healthcare, workforce development to education, recurring themes emerged from these discussions, painting a clear picture of the opportunities and challenges facing the CNMI. King-Hinds didn't just identify issues—she called for action.

"In these meetings, I emphasized the need for genuine partnership and a shared commitment to putting pen to paper to address our challenges and craft practical solutions," she stated. "There are significant issues across the functions of the CNMI government that require federal action and assistance to resolve. This isn't about taking credit—it's about delivering results for the people of the CNMI. We must move beyond discussions and focus on impactful actions—actions that improve our healthcare system, enhance outcomes for our students, make utilities and transportation more affordable, and raise the standard of living for our people."

King-Hinds also emphasized that the conclusion of this listening tour does not mark the end of her engagement with the community. "Listening to the concerns of the people will remain a cornerstone of my work as delegate," she said. "Hearing directly from our community will guide my decisions and ensure that the federal policies we pursue address the realities faced by the CNMI."

King-Hinds expressed her deep gratitude to the agencies, leaders, and institutions that participated in her listening sessions. "I thank each agency and organization for sharing their perspectives and experiences with me," she said. "Your insights will be at the heart of the work I take to Washington, D.C." ***(PR)***

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

Casa Oceano raises $8K for Tourism Education Council's WAVE Club

TUMON, Guam—The Tsubaki Tower, part of the P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. hotel group, announced that the Casa Oceano fundraiser to support the Tourism Education Council's WAVE Club yielded $8,000 in donations to support tourism education.

Throughout November 2024, The Tsubaki Tower committed to donating proceeds for every guest who dined at Casa Oceano, the resort's all-day dining restaurant. The WAVE Club is a nonprofit school-based program for public and private school students in the third to twelfth grades to promote the importance of tourism on Guam.

Ken Yanagisawa, president and CEO for P.H.R. Ken Micronesia and the general manager for The Tsubaki Tower, shared that Heidi Ballendorf, executive director for the Tourism Education Council, reached out for a sponsorship for an activity, and they discussed how they can creatively work together to raise funds for the WAVE Club.

Yanagisawa said, "We believe in the important mission of the TEC to educate our students about the significance of Guam's top industry—tourism—and how a strong tourism economy benefits our community. With thanks to our Casa Oceano guests, we were able to raise $8,000 to support the WAVE Club's ongoing work in the island's schools."

Ballendorf added, "We are deeply appreciative of this support from The Tsubaki Tower team. It means a great deal to our 400-plus students and 25 teachers. WAVE stands for 'Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically' and emphasizes what makes Guam a unique destination, which is our people, culture, history, environment, language, and even our food. We so appreciate our partnership with The Tsubaki Tower, and we hope it will continue in the future."

CONTRIBITED PHOTO/

The Tsubaki Tower, a P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. hotel, donated $8,000 to the Tourism Education Council's WAVE Club to support tourism education. Throughout November 2024, The Tsubaki Tower hosted a fundraiser at Casa Oceano, the resort's all-day restaurant, and committed to donating proceeds from each guest to the club. From left, Rosan Fernando, WAVE Club coordinator, Maria Ulloa Elementary School; Maridel Perez, WAVE Club coordinator, Maria Ulloa Elementary School; Ken Yanagisawa, president and CEO, P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. and general manager, The Tsubaki Tower; Donna Muña-Quinata, chairwoman, Tourism Education Council; Heidi Ballendorf, executive director, Tourism Education Council; Joel Davis, assistant general manager, The Tsubaki Tower; and Vincent "Ben" Cruz, Military, Corporate Sales, and Community PR manager, The Tsubaki Tower.

About the Tourism Education Council's WAVE Club

The TEC's WAVE Club was established in 1988 as a grassroots advocacy group for the tourism industry. The TEC introduces students to the importance of the tourism industry and teaches Guam's youth the importance of a "sense of place" and what makes Guam a unique destination. The WAVE Club takes pride in keeping Guam clean through beautification projects, exercising its motto that what is good for the community is also good for tourism.

The Tsubaki journey

The Tsubaki Tower is Guam's most luxurious resort experience. The Tsubaki Tower's mission is to be an authentic ambassador of Guam's culture, natural beauty, and unique history. Located along the shores of stunning Gun Beach, the 27-story resort will offer guests panoramic views of Guam's famous sunsets and the warm blues of the Pacific Ocean. The resort is nestled in the northern part of Tumon Bay and features 340 breathtaking oceanfront rooms and suites, all within walking distance of Guam's most beautiful white-sand beaches and a world-class marine preserve. The resort features two types of dining, three types of bars, a lobby lounge, deli, club lounge, swimming pools, garden plaza, multifunction room, and a chapel in the sky. For further information about The Tsubaki Tower visit tsubakitower.kenhotels.com/guam/ or engage with them on Instagram and Facebook (@thetsubakitower).

About Premier Hotel Group

Ken Hotels & Resorts Holdings Ltd. has been managing hotels for more than 15 years. Ken Hotels & Resorts Holdings Ltd. is a member of Ken Corporation Group, a pioneer in the high-end real estate rental market in metropolitan areas, currently owns and operates 36 hotels—27 properties throughout major cities in Japan, such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Okinawa and nine hotels in Guam, Saipan, and the U.S. in collaboration with several international hotel chains. For more information about Ken Hotels & Resorts Holdings Ltd, visit kenhotels.com/en/. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-25-010
FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, 2026 & 2027

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) requires the services of a U.S. Certified Public Accounting Firm/Individual with knowledge, skill, and experience in auditing (1) financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards of the U.S. and; (2) federal awards programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and U.S. Office of Management and Budget requisites

- Provide assistance to the CUC management with the preparation of the annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Ensure that the financial statements and auditor's reports also meet any specific requirements contained in agreements or other contractual requirements relative to financial statement presentation and the audits.
- Submit the draft financial statements and accompanying auditor's reports to CUC management no later than January 31st of each year, and issue the final reports no later than February 28th of each year.
- Provide 15 bound copies of the final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report
- Provide an electronic copy (e.g., .pdf format) of the final report to the CUC.

Auditors are responsible to review the 2025, 2026 & 2027 financial statements to include the physical CUC assets for each fiscal year.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-25-010, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2025, 2026 & 2027"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 10, 2025 at 10:00 AM** (ChST). Submissions, in PDF, must also be emailed to the addresses as noted in the RFP. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 20, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Betty G. Terlaje, CUC Chief Financial Officer, via email address betty.terlaje@cucgov.org,, Rodolfo Urbano, CUC Chief Accountant via email, rodolfo.urbano@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary	Opening Date	Closing Date
2025-004	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 Per annum	December 27, 2024	January 11, 2025 4:00 PM
2025-005	CDBG-DR Accountant (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 Per annum	December 27, 2024	January 11, 2025 4:00 PM
2025-006	CDBG-DR Finance Manager (1-Position)	UNGRADED $50,000.00 to $60,000.00 Per annum	December 27, 2024	January 11, 2025 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to hr@nmhcgov.net.
All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Elicia San Nicolas, HR Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to hr@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
Zenie P. Mafnas
Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
NMHC IFB 2025-003

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: January 10, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Purchase of Two (2) Preowned Pick Up Trucks

The bid package will be available on December 16, 2024, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab".

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

For any inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670)234-9021, on or before December 27, 2024, no later than 10 a.m.

/s/ ZENIE P. MAFNAS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Immigration is good for America—Newcomers are the clear answer to population collapse

Immigration is essential to America's health, otherwise we would be losing population and heading to a downward economic spiral. According to Census Bureau figures published Thursday, international migration accounted for about 84% of the country's roughly 3.3-million-person increase between 2023 and 2024; without it, the U.S. population would be without a shadow of a doubt stagnating.

In fact, newcomers pushed our populace growth to nearly 1%, its fastest rate in 23 years, proving that political calls by Donald Trump and others to close our borders are dumb as well as wrong.

Incoming First Pal Elon Musk has long been preoccupied with birthrates in the highly developed nations, adopting the line that these countries are headed to a sort of extinction. Just Saturday, he was back on the topic, using his social media megaphone to warn that "Japan and many other countries face population collapse."

There are a number of public policy interventions that could conceivably help the crisis as Musk envisions it. There could be big increases in housing for would-be families who can barely keep their heads above water in small or shared houses and apartments. There could be safety net fiscal policies like an expanded child income tax credit and child care subsidies to make the decision to have children seem financially feasible in the long run.

Yet, the No. 1 policy solution to a declining working-age population and its strains on the economy and the social safety system is the one answer that Trump and Musk won't embrace: immigration.

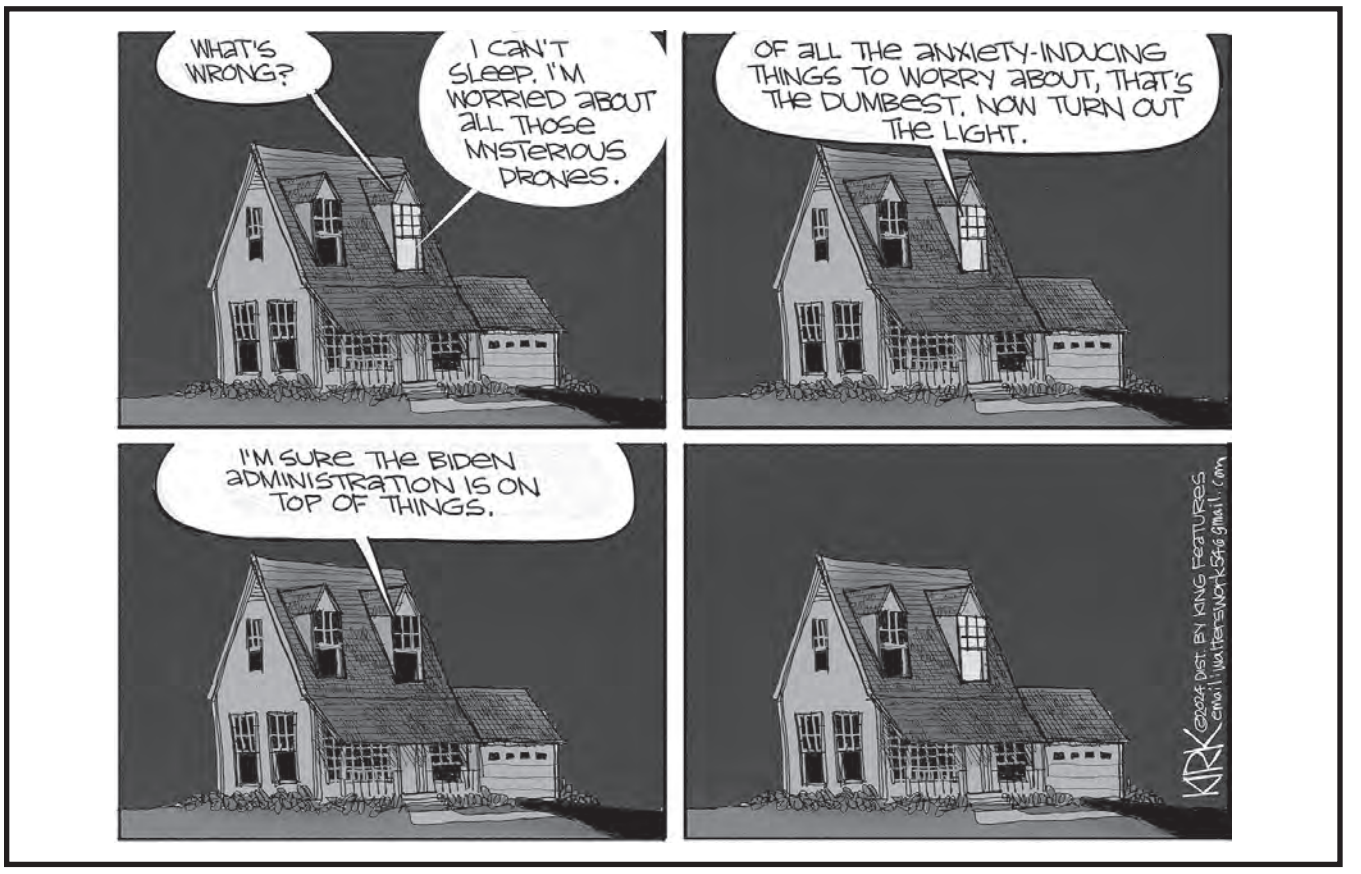
There is no substitute; no one has found an alternative, anywhere. Japan is on the brink of population disaster because they've tried every solution except a broader loosening of immigration laws.

Only recently, in the face of an ever-worsening crisis, have the Japanese lurched towards the obvious, too late to head off some of the painful effects of a warped population pyramid: too few young workers to support too many retired seniors. And the problem keeps getting worse as birth rates decline.

Europe is on the same path of declining populations, stubbornly refusing to accept that the much-maligned waves of recent immigration have been a lifeline. The anti-immigrant rhetoric has been so acute that an anti-immigration far-right extremist in Germany—ironically himself an immigrant—just attacked a holiday market, killing at least five and injuring hundreds.

The United States' global primacy, the very idea of Ameri-

See IMMIGRATION on Page 7


WHAT'S WRONG?
I CAN'T SLEEP. I'M WORRIED ABOUT ALL THOSE MYSTERIOUS DRONES.
OF ALL THE ANXIETY-INDUCING THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT, THAT'S THE DUMBEST. NOW TURN OUT THE LIGHT.
I'M SURE THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION IS ON TOP OF THINGS.
KIRK
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email: lwritersworks@gmail.com

2024 IN REVIEW:

Reflections on mission and progress

By REAR ADM. GREGORY HUFFMAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman is the commander of Joint Task Force-Micronesia.

SAN, Guam—Buenas yan Hafa Adai. As I reflect on 2024 and my first six months as the Joint Task Force-Micronesia Commander, I am filled with a profound sense of pride at the incredible amount of work that has been accomplished in Guam and across our region. I am also humbled by the opportunity to lead such a talented team of professionals and work with such incredible partners.

This has been a year of growth, partnership, and resilience, not just for the Joint Task Force, but also for the entire Indo-Pacific region.

When I assumed command in June, I was immediately reminded of the weight of our mission. In my new role, I am tasked to synchronize operations and activities in the region across all domains to enable a robust warfighting posture and enhance partner nation capacity.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command established JTF-M to strengthen regional cooperation and provide a unified U.S. presence in one of the most strategically important areas of the world. It is a demonstration of our commitment to protect and defend this region. It's a mission we approach with focus and purpose, knowing that our work has a direct impact on the security and prosperity of our Pacific islands family.

Strengthening partnerships

One of my top priorities this year has been strengthening our partnerships throughout Micronesia. Security in this region depends on mutual trust and collaboration, and I am proud of the team for the strides we have made in enhancing those relationships.

In the past year, we worked closer than ever with Governor Leon Guerrero and the government of Guam through the Civil-Military Coordination Council and with Governor Palacios and the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands through the executive and agency stakeholder meetings that centered on promoting shared interests and developing common bonds.

Our first CNMI Industry Day in Saipan and Tinian last September was a tremendous success and highlighted our promise of supporting mutually beneficial economic growth in the Marianas. We want residents to benefit from our investments and presence here by directly partnering through small business opportunities and employment with local businesses and the Department of Defense. Construction is the dominant activity in the CNMI, but the future looks promising as we shift to operations, expanded training and ensure we maintain the investments for years to come.

We also continued our commitment to Title III of the Compact of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau through our Joint Committee Meetings, where we are working closely to ensure that our actions in the region protect the sovereignty and security of the COFA states and their respective Exclusive Economic Zones while respecting the concerns and interests of the people.

I very much look forward to the coming year, as we expand the Joint Task Force area of responsibility and engage in robust dialogue with our partners in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I also look forward to opportunities to better align efforts of federal partners as we all strive to efficiently deliver on the promises of the Compacts.

Enhancing readiness

The Indo-Pacific is a dynamic region, and the challenges we face are ever evolving. This past year, we held 18 major exercises, including Exercise Sea Dragon, Cope North, Valiant Shield, and Pacific Vanguard, involving partner nations such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and Canada.

Training evolutions not only demonstrate capability; they help our armed forces learn and adapt. When we train with our regional allies, the lessons we learn ensure that together we are ready to meet any challenge that lies ahead. It is our personal commitment to promote prosperity and security, deter aggression and protect our way of life. Not only do we deliver power for peace, but we are always ready to fight to win as part of the Joint Force and alongside our Allies and partners.

Preparing for the future, when being there matters

It is clear that the Indo-Pacific will remain the center of global security. We are laser-focused on ensuring that the U.S. can continue to answer the region's defense needs, while strengthening our capabilities for the future.

Just last month we marked a significant milestone with the first homeporting of a Virginia-class submarine, USS *Minnesota* (SSN 783), in Guam. This addition highlights the importance

See REFLECTIONS on Page 7

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Truth 80: Subterfuge with a federal stink looming and no trust!

By AMBROSE M. BENNETT
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ambrose M. Bennett is an economist who minored in sociology, political scientist, a retired teacher, and former CNMI Board of Education member, a James Madison Fellow (U.S. constitutional scholar), a Fulbright-Hays and lifetime humanities scholar who resides in Kagman III in the CNMI.

The truth is the governor is making the smell rose trying to nullify Ambrose's check, (accountability challenge) that should be a checkmate on his subterfuge if Dems or independents do their job and hold the governor accountable, as it is their fiduciary constitutional duty to the people to maintain checks and balances on the Executive Branch. The conditions have certainly changed since the public hearing which is why the governor is indirectly trying to nullify Ambrose as it was no need for him to make that statement, but he knows citizens have learned the public hearing was a sham with a lie about creating competition and purposely withheld very pregnant information about the eviction of Star Marianas. If this had been in a court of law, the governor and CEDA would already be guilty of withholding vital evidence—for true! The governor didn't expect anyone to connect the dots, but I could smell something awful the moment the governor claimed CEDA was our experts after years of economic gloom and doom with businesses dying and leaving and now the governor just made it exceptionally foul countering Ambrose, instead of simply conducting another public hearing. Your trust pledge is flying out the window governor with you violating federal anti-trust law—LOL if not such a sad joke!

He doesn't seem to realize that by him even coming forward to reiterate his incentives to businesses BS that his very statement inferred he intends to sign the application with that justification. He wants you, people, to assume he is right and Star Marianas' complaint is of no consequence and that I don't know what I'm talking about when the facts are out there for everyone to see which exposes the subterfuge. Furthermore, our medical travel is nowhere near the level needed to justify giving away 22 years of our tax money when there are two other solutions available with no risk that I have mentioned—the bigotry-affliction! But most important of all, monopolies are violations of federal antitrust law, and this is still America governor where monopolies are illegal, so don't end up like Ralph thinking you are smarter using CEDA. Ralph started it and Arnold is finishing it in defiance of the facts right in our faces—heller!

This stink by Republicans is a clear example of all power of CPA, CEDA, and the governor being absolutely corrupt. There is no way CEDA, nor can the governor justify to the people nor the feds: Getting rid of Star Marianas for MACS when Ralph instigated this is just wrong, but it does prove Arnold and Ralph are still on the same page which should scare everyone to death—for true! For CEDA to say that our tax money is going to create competition, when any economist, and I'm a real economist, can tell you that if MACS is getting 100% tax relief there will be no competition, as MACS will have an extreme unfair competitive advantage giftwrapped with our money by the governor and crew of Republicans. There is a legitimate claim that our governor is aggressively flirting with violating federal antitrust law in a true Trumpian style when we just saw this same movie with Ralph and the exclusive casino creating a monopoly, but no one took our government to court and now they're trying again, a pattern is revealed! So here we go again being poli-tricked by CEDA and forced by the governor to bet we will be the winners in this 22-year gamble that is too big of a gamble for entirely too long but Republicans love for us to gamble, as they've made gambling our business for over two decades against our will, when tourism is our business—thanks Chris it's an awesome slogan calling for real stewardship! But CEDA didn't present any economic science work (financial data computations and economic forecast computations) to prove the CNMI is getting a great deal. Instead CEDA used the art of economics asserting the now known lie of creating competition. Furthermore, the House of Representatives are the only authorized representatives of the people to give away our tax money unless Republicans have rigged our laws too. We need the Dems bad, but Republicans have them afraid to simply say—"Ambrose is right" or do they prefer Joe Palacios-Barabbas!

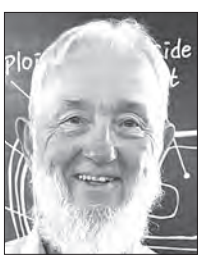
I predicted this deal was going to stink and now it's full-blown, especially if the governor signs, as he will need to hope and pray Star Marianas doesn't take him to federal court, as he's clearly following in Ralph's footsteps with Trumpian thinking he is smarter using CEDA. I still truly believe there is (or) are Republican interest in this deal. But there is also the chance for a personal lawsuit against CPA, CEDA, and the governor, as the manager of Star Marianas is now in the hospital on Guam due to the unwarranted stress created by illegal duress acts of CPA, CEDA, and the governor—prayers for him. Governor, you do know a monopoly is illegal, and you are about to violate federal law using a fake incentivizing lie! Creating a monopoly when the competition was pressured under undue duress and illegally evicted without due process in a court of law, using CEDA's kangaroo economic subterfuge is crossing the line of federal antitrust law and RICO, given CPA, CEDA, and the governor were seemingly all working in concert (racketeering)! Ralph again with Arnold, as the fact Star Marianas was not even present at the first public hearing that was full of smoke and mirrors. But instead of capitulating for his people, he doubles down indirectly attacking Star Marianas and what Ambrose has exposed spreading the stink, as we are now talking about violations of federal law, smell it!

Maybe one day it will be commonly acceptable that Ambrose is trying to do right for the people like I was asked to do by our late Bishop and by a plethora of people in the community who tell me daily to "Keep it up, Mr. Bennett," as I belong to God when the Republicans with their subterfuge are acting more like they belong to the other guy and their hearts are harden like pharaoh's. But I'm sure the silent majority can't be like Republicans and my Fanclub of 3, in the comment section, as we know what happened to pharaoh. So, if Dems and citizens want to believe in the governor's and Republican's subterfuge over the truth shared by Star Marianas and the devil in the details I've shared, then I can only pray for a real two party system, especially when it's clear Arnold is setting Dems up for losing as he gets ready for a second run at poli-tricking us again with no real economic recovery plan- just continued subterfuge like we are seeing now to control all interisland air travel! All it takes for evil to prevail if for the good men/women to do and say nothing, as Dems, independents, and voters are the good masters of our fate and future, not Republicans, so what will it be!

Stumbling between the immensities

(Using the structure of a Petrarchan sonnet)

LITERARY NOOK



By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey Connolly aka «Pepe Batbon» is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is the Poet Laureate of Tinian and enjoys stargazing.

We are between the immensities of birth and death
we are born, we live, we die, a wise guy answers
we depart the womb and live until our last breath
sometimes our trip is cut short by various cancers
in between we crawl walk run stumble sleep and eat
birds, animals, fruits above ground and roots beneath
drink beer, wine, whiskey, eat things too salty too sweet
watch folks overeat digging their grave with their teeth.

In between we experience the joys and sadness of life
the happiness and comforts of home, husband and wife
babies play, children sing, teens fall in and out of love
parents handle problems, sometimes with a velvet glove
some separate, divorce, go on and off course prediction.
We all stumble between the immensities with conviction.

Readers may find me next year in the *Marianas Variety*.

REFLECTIONS

From page 6

of Guam as an operational platform and enhances our undersea capabilities in an evolving maritime environment.

In a first for Guam, the Missile Defense Agency, working with our local commands, successfully tested our missile defense capabilities in anticipation of the installment of an Enhanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense system.

The Guam Defense System will serve as a critical pillar of defense in this region ensuring we are ready to counter advanced threats.

As we close out 2024, we also welcomed approximately 100 logistics support Marines from III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) as part of the first wave of movers into Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz. These Marines will hit the ground running and expand our expeditionary capabilities to respond to regional crises.

Camp Blaz has come a long way, and we are very proud of our environmental teams, who worked hard to ensure that the precious cultural and natural resources in Guam are protected, without losing force lethality to meet our mission as an armed force.

Looking ahead to maintaining peace and prosperity

As we prepare for 2025, I am extremely optimistic about the road ahead. There is still much work to do, but I am confident in the strength of our team, the partnerships we have built, and the friendships we share.

The success of JTF-M is the result of the dedication and professionalism of the men and women who serve alongside me. Together, we are proving that when like-minded nations come together with a shared vision, there is no challenge we cannot overcome.

I am proud of our accomplishments in 2024, and excited to realize the fruits of our labor in 2025 and well into the future. There is no doubt that the Indo-Pacific is a region of immense promise, and I am honored to be part of the team working toward security and stability for the region and for our families who call this very special place their island home. Biba Guam, Biba JTF-M!

IMMIGRATION

From page 6

can exceptionalism itself, rests entirely on a base of mass immigration that has fueled our growth with newcomers from around the world. The immigrants and their descendants then become Americans. This is not and has never been a matter of opinion; opponents will claim that this idea is "woke" or globalist or any number of other loose ideological terms because they cannot refute it on the merits.

There is no American Century, no dollar as reserve currency, no unmatched military, no soft power, no cultural dominance, no scientific preeminence, no industrial might without the absorption of talent and labor from everywhere else. We can only hope this most fundamental of American ideals survives the second Trump era, before irreversible damage is done.

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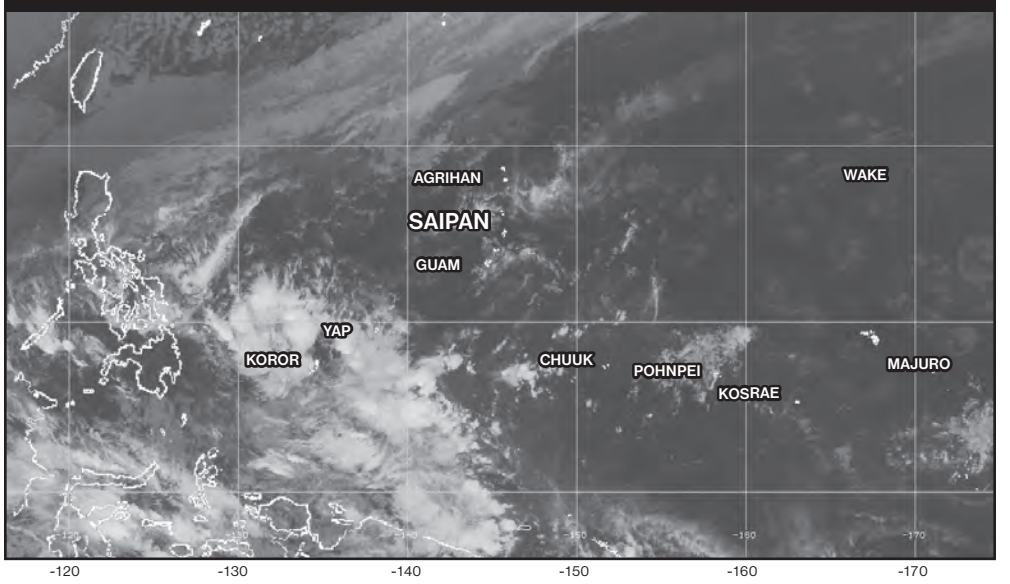
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. Chance of showers 20 percent.	Breezy. Mostly sunny with a slight chance of showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86° / 77°	86° / 77°	86° / 77°	86° / 77°	86° / 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 4:39 AM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Little to no changes were made this forecast package. The trade dominant pattern will continue over the next several days. Altimetry and buoy data show combined seas of 6 to 8 feet across the Marianas. Combined seas will remain elevated through the first half of the week before falling 1 to 2 feet towards the middle of the week. There may be a brief period Monday night and Tuesday where the easterly swell increases a foot while the northerly swell decreases a foot. This would keep combined seas in the 6 to 8 foot range while leading to a high risk for rip currents along east facing reefs.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Palau	Cloudy	85° / 78°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Light Rain Shower	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Tuesday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:59 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:54 AM	5:12 PM	-
Tuesday	6:51 AM	6:11 PM	-
Wednesday	7:46 AM	7:11 PM	-
Thursday	8:36 AM	8:11 PM	-
Friday	9:23 AM	9:09 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Rain	72° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	30° / 7°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	63° / 52°
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	80° / 69°
London	Partly Cloudy	46° / 37°
Los Angeles	Sunny	63° / 43°
Manila	Rain	81° / 75°
Melbourne	Cloudy	79° / 64°
Miami	Thunderstorms	79° / 75°
New York	Rain	57° / 49°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	45° / 36°
Paris	Showers	41° / 37°
Busan	Windy	37° / 21°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°
Salem	Thunderstorms	67° / 55°
San Francisco	Sunny	55° / 43°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	39° / 19°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	45° / 32°
Washington, DC	Rain	61° / 49°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
6:35 AM	High Tide	1.35
11:02 AM	Low Tide	1.05
4:16 PM	High Tide	1.55
11:54 PM	Low Tide	-0.25

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	1:20PM	4:00PM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3218/2305	2:45AM	10:20PM	Daily via Incheon
UA076/183 Guam	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:30AM	6:25AM	Daily
7C3218	2:45AM	6:45AM	Daily from Dec 8
7C3212	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3552	3:55AM	7:20AM	3, 6 from Dec 25

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX77	3:05AM	5:55AM	1, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	5:30PM	10:05PM	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA156	00:40AM	6:25AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:40AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA156	00:40AM	8:45AM	3, 6 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3407	11:20PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3211	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:00PM	1:30AM+1	Daily
7C3217	8:10PM	1:40AM+1	Daily from Dec 8

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3551	9:25PM	2:50AM+1	2, 5 from Dec 25

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

HX76	6:25PM	1:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Bank of Guam donates $20K to four non-profits

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—In the true spirit of the season, Bank of Guam is proud to announce a $20,000 donation to four nonprofit organizations through its annual Employee Give Initiative.

Each year, employees at Bank of Guam champion the causes closest to their hearts by nominating and voting for organizations across the region. The top four nonprofits are awarded grants to support their missions, with this year's recipients each receiving $5,000.

The 2024 recipients of Bank of Guam's Employee Giving Initiative are:

■ Guam Animals In Need (GAIN): Located in Yigo, GAIN provides shelter, food, medical attention, and a nurturing environment for animals, working toward creating a safer and more compassionate world for them.

■ Make-A-Wish Guam and CNMI: Make-A-Wish grants life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses and provides hope and strength to them and their families.

■ Northern Marianas Humanities Council: Celebrating culture, history, and education, the Northern Marianas Humanities Council nurtures community connection and understanding through storytelling, programs, research, dialogue, and publications.

■ Palau Red Cross Society: In times of crisis, the Palau Red Cross Society provides emergency relief, humanitarian aid, and critical health support to communities in need.

BOG

From left, Myra Mayer; Ibuuch Kumaichi; Zoe Leemansky, all volunteers with Palau Red Cross Society; Brandon Cruz, vice president, Palau branch manager, Bank of Guam; Hilda Reklai, board member; Jay Olegeriil, board member; J. Maireng Sengebau, executive director, all from Palau Red Cross Society.

The annual Holiday Give was established in 2017 and continues to spread cheer during the Christmas season as part of Bank of Guam's year-round campaign to "Be Kind" and "Find Kind." This year's beneficiaries span Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and the neighboring islands. As The People's Bank, community has always been at the heart of everything we do—through our partnerships, sponsorships, and countless everyday acts of kindness that quietly make a difference. We're proud of our employees, who have chosen to champion causes that resonate deeply with them, supporting meaningful work throughout our communities. It's a reminder that Life Is Sweeter When You Give A Little Love. Together, we've created an impact that will continue to resonate far beyond the season of giving," said Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, Bank of Guam senior vice president and chief experience officer. ***(PR)***

BOG

From left, Eric Tydingco, president/CEO, Make-A-Wish Guam and CNMI; Maria Eugenia Leon Guerrero, executive vice president, chief operating officer, Bank of Guam; Tina Erickson, office manager, GAIN; Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, senior vice president, chief experience officer, Bank of Guam; and Jason Miyashita, board chair, Make-A-Wish Guam and CNMI.

BOG

From left, are Tania David, vice president, Garapan branch manager, Bank of Guam; Marcie M. Tomokane, vice president, CNMI regional manager, Bank of Guam; Gretchen A. Smith, chair, Northern Marianas Humanities Council; Leo G. Pangelinan, executive director, Northern Marianas Humanities Council; and Augustin Jr. Palacios, utility officer IV, Bank of Guam.

PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB25-BECQ/DEQ-42500026

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 21, 2025 TIME: 9:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "I" VEHICLE FOR THE BECQ-DEQ SAFE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR ACCESS PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG. NO. 12386 ASCENCION DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MS. RIKKI CAMACHO, FEDERAL GRANTS COORDINATOR VIA EMAIL AT RIKKI.CAMACHO@BECQ.GOV.MP BY JANUARY 09, 2025, BY 4:30 P.M, ChST.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FLOYD MASGA
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO.: RFP25-BECQ/DEQ-42500025

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 21, 2025
TIME: 9:00 A.M.

"TO PROVIDE FACILITATION AND LOGISTICAL COORDINATION FOR THE BIENNIAL PACIFIC ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE AND PACIFIC ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR'S MEETING"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR ACCESS PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG. NO. 12386 ASCENSION DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO MR. JUSTIN PANGELINAN, CLEAN AIR PROGRAM MANAGER AT justin.pangelinan@becq.gov.mp BY JANUARY 09, 2025, BY 4:30 P.M, ChST.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FLOYD MASGA
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 • Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315 • www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of December 30, 2024

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

NO.	APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1.	H J 2 Corporation dba Marine World	11/18/2024 SLR-2025-007	Commercial Motorized Parasailing Activities	All Designated Parasailing Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Application Tabled* 11/20/2024
2.	Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC)	12/11/2024 SPIm-2025-009	Upgrade and Reconstruction of SO3 Sewer Lift Station	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Approved* 12/17/2024
3.	Saipan Crewboats, Inc.	12/20/2024 SPIm-2025-010	Dry Dock Activities	Lowerbase, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Application Under Review*
4.	Byung Gwan Chae dba Thank You Lime	12/20/2024 SLRm-2025-011	Managaha Temporary Beachfront Concession	Managaha Island, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Application Tabled* 12/24/2024

=NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

World

Putin apologizes for 'tragic incident'

MOSCOW (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologized to his Azerbaijani counterpart for what he called a "tragic incident" following the crash of an Azerbaijani airliner in Kazakhstan that killed 38 people, but stopped short of acknowledging that Moscow was responsible.

Putin's apology came as allegations mounted that the plane had been shot down by Russian air defenses attempting to deflect a Ukrainian drone strike near Grozny, the regional capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya.

An official Kremlin statement issued Saturday said that air defense systems were firing near Grozny airport as the airliner "repeatedly" attempted to land there on Wednesday. It did not explicitly say one of these hit the plane.

The statement said Putin apologized to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev "for the fact that the tragic incident occurred in Russian airspace."

The readout said Russia has launched a criminal probe into the incident, and Azerbaijani state prosecutors have arrived in Grozny to participate. The Kremlin also said that "relevant services" from Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are jointly investigating the crash site near the city of Aktau in Kazakhstan.

The plane was flying from Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, to Grozny when it turned toward Kazakhstan, hundreds of kilometers (miles) across the Caspian Sea from its intended destination, and crashed while making an attempt to land. There were 29 survivors.

According to a readout of the call provided by Aliyev's press office, the Azerbaijani president told Putin that the plane was subject to "external physical and technical interference," although he also stopped short of blaming Russian air defenses.

AP

In this photo taken from a video released by the administration of Mangystau region, a part of Azerbaijan Airlines' Embraer 190 lies on the ground near the airport of Aktau, Kazakhstan, on Thursday, Dec. 26, 2024.

Aliyev noted that the plane had multiple holes in its fuselage and that the occupants had sustained injuries "due to foreign particles penetrating the cabin mid-flight."

He said that a team of international experts had begun probing the incident at Azerbaijan's initiative, but provided no details. Earlier this week, the Azerbaijani Prosecutor General's office confirmed that investigators from Azerbaijan are working in Grozny.

On Friday, a U.S. official and an Azerbaijani minister made separate statements blaming the crash on an external weapon, echoing those made by aviation experts who blamed the crash on Russian air defense systems responding to a Ukrainian attack.

Passengers and crew who survived the crash told Azerbaijani media that they heard loud noises on the aircraft as it was circling over Grozny.

» But stops short of saying Azerbaijani plane was shot down

Dmitry Yadrov, head of Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia, said Friday that as the plane was preparing to land in Grozny in deep fog, Ukrainian drones were targeting the city, prompting authorities to close the area to air traffic.

Yadrov said that after the captain made two unsuccessful attempts to land, he was offered other airports but decided to fly to Aktau.

Earlier in the week, Rosaviatsia had cited unspecified early evidence as showing that a bird strike led to an emergency on board.

In the days following the crash, Azerbaijan Airlines blamed "physical and technical interference" and announced the suspension of flights to several Russian airports. It didn't say where the interference came from or provide any further details.

If proven that the plane crashed after being hit by Russian fire, it would be the second deadly civil aviation accident linked to fighting in Ukraine. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was downed with a Russian surface-to-air missile, killing all 298 people aboard, as it flew over the area in eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed separatists in 2014.

Russia has denied responsibility, but a Dutch court in 2022 convicted two Russians and a pro-Russia Ukrainian man for their role in downing the plane with an air defense system brought into Ukraine from a Russian military base.

Following Wednesday's suspension of flights from Baku to Grozny and nearby Makhachkala, Azerbaijan Airlines announced Friday that it would also halt service to eight more Russian cities.

Several other airlines have made similar announcements since the crash. Kazakhstan's Qazaq Air on Friday said it would stop flying from Astana to the Russian city of Yekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains for a month.

Turkmenistan Airlines, the Central Asian country's flagship carrier, on Saturday halted flights to Moscow for at least a month, citing safety concerns. Earlier this week, Israel's El Al carrier suspended service from Tel Aviv to the Russian capital, citing "developments in Russia's airspace."

China says PH plan to deploy midrange missiles would be 'extremely irresponsible'

BEIJING (AP)—China said a plan by the Philippines to deploy midrange missiles would be a provocative move that stokes regional tensions.

The Philippines top army official told reporters in Manila earlier on Monday that the military plans to acquire a midrange system to defend the country's territory amid tensions with China in the South China Sea.

"Yes, there are plans, there are negotiations, because we see its feasibility and adaptability," Lt. Gen. Roy Galido said.

The U.S. deployed its Typhon midrange missile system in the northern Philippines in April and troops from both countries have been training jointly for the potential use of the heavy weaponry. They have agreed to keep the system in the Philippines indefinitely to boost deterrence.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said that deployment of a midrange missile by the Philippines would intensify geopolitical confrontation and an arms race.

"It is an extremely irresponsible choice for the history and people of itself and the whole of Southeast Asia, as well as for the security of the region," she told a daily briefing.

China, which opposes U.S. military assistance to the Philippines, has been particularly alarmed by the deployment of the Typhon system, which can fire the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile. The Tomahawk can travel more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers), putting China within its range.

Under President Joe Biden, the U.S. has strengthened an arc of alliances in the Indo-Pacific to counter China, including in any confrontation over Taiwan.

The Philippines would not necessarily buy the Typhon system, Galido said.

The army is working not only with the United States but with other friendly countries on a long list of weapons platforms that it plans to acquire, he said.

The Philippines defense plan includes protecting its exclusive economic zone, which reaches 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers).

"It is paramount for the army to be able to project its force up to that extent, in coordination, of course, with the Philippine navy and the Philippine air force," Galido said.

Israeli airstrikes hit Yemen airport as a jet with hundreds onboard was landing

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Israeli airstrikes hit Yemen's main airport as a civilian Airbus 320 with hundreds of passengers on board was landing and a U.N. delegation was waiting to leave, the U.N.'s top humanitarian official in Yemen said Friday.

Julien Harneis told U.N. reporters that the most frightening thing about the two airstrikes on Thursday wasn't their effect on him and about 15 others in the VIP lounge at the international airport in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, including the head of the U.N. World Health Organization.

Rather, it was the destruction of the airport control tower as a Yemenia Airways plane was taxiing in after touching down.

"Fortunately, that plane was able to land safely and the passengers were able to disembark, but it could have been far, far worse," said Harneis, who was with WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in the lounge.

He said one airstrike landed approximately 300 meters (330 yards) south of the VIP lounge and another about 300 meters to the north around 4:45 p.m., while about five members of the U.N. team were outside the building.

"Not only obviously did we have zero indication of any potential airstrikes, but we cannot remember the last time there were airstrikes in Sanaa during daylight hours," Harneis said in a video news conference from Sanaa.

The U.N. said at least three people were killed and dozens injured in the strike. Among the injured was a crew member from the U.N. Humanitarian Air Service, which was about to fly the U.N. delegation of some 20 people out of Sanaa.

He suffered a serious leg injury from shrapnel and lost a lot of blood, Harneis said.

Immediately after the airstrikes, Harneis said, U.N. security officials moved the delegation out of the VIP building and into five armored cars where they waited for approximately 40 minutes to ascertain what happened and help the injured crew member.

He was taken to a hospital in Sanaa and underwent four hours of surgery while the rest of the delegation spent the night in a U.N. compound, Harneis said. The U.N. plane with Tedros and the U.N. team, including the injured crew member, was able to depart for Jordan on Friday afternoon – without an operating control tower.

The United Nations said the injured crew member was taken to a hospital in Jordan, and Tedros was heading back to Geneva, where WHO is based,

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who control Sanaa and much of the country's north, have gone after Israel since it started attacking Gaza following the Oct. 7, 2023 attacks by Gaza's Hamas militants on southern Israel. The Houthis have attacked ships in the Red Sea, disrupting one of the world's main maritime routes, and recently stepped up missile and drone attacks on Israel. Early Saturday, the Israeli Air Force reported intercepting yet another missile from Yemen, as sirens woke Israelis around Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

Israel has escalated its response.

The Israeli army said it wasn't aware that the WHO chief or U.N. delegation were at the Sanaa airport on Thursday. Israel said it bombed the airport because it is used by the Houthis and Iran.

Harneis responded, stressing that the airport is civilian, not military, and is used for transporting U.N. and other humanitarian workers, and for one civilian flight—Yemenia to and from Amman, Jordan. The flight operates as a result of an international agreement, and thousands of Yemenis have used the flight to get advanced medical treatment abroad, he said.

Life & Style

Olivia Hussey, star of the 1968 film 'Romeo and Juliet,' dies at 73

LONDON (AP)—Olivia Hussey, the actor who starred as a teenage Juliet in the 1968 film "Romeo and Juliet," has died, her family said on social media Saturday. She was 73.

Hussey died on Friday, "peacefully at home surrounded by her loved ones," a statement posted to her Instagram account said.

Hussey was 15 when director Franco Zeffirelli cast her in his adaptation of the William Shakespeare tragedy after spotting her onstage in the play "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie," which also starred Vanessa Redgrave.

"Romeo and Juliet" won two Oscars and Hussey won a Golden Globe for best new actress for her part as Juliet, opposite British actor Leonard Whiting, who was 16 at the time.

Decades later Hussey and Whiting brought a lawsuit against Paramount Pictures alleging sexual abuse, sexual harassment and fraud over nude scenes in the film.

They alleged that they were initially told they would wear flesh-colored undergarments in a bedroom scene, but on the day of the shoot Zeffirelli told the pair they would wear only body makeup and that the camera would be positioned in a way that would not show nudity. They alleged they were filmed in the nude without their knowledge.

AP

"Romeo and Juliette" movie director Franco Zeffirelli, left, actors Olivia Hussey, center, and Leonard Whiting are seen after the Parisian premiere of the film in Paris on Sept. 25, 1968.

The case was dismissed by a Los Angeles County judge in 2023, who found their depiction could not be considered child pornography and the pair filed their claim too late.

Whiting was among those paying tribute to Hussey on Saturday. "Rest now my beautiful Juliet no injustices can hurt you now. And the world will remember your beauty inside and out forever," he wrote.

Hussey was born on April 17, 1951, in Bueno Aires, Argentina, and moved to London as a child. She studied at the Italia Conti Academy drama school.

She also starred as Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the 1977 television series "Jesus of Nazareth," as well as the 1978 adaptation of Agatha Christie's "Death on the Nile" and horror movies "Black Christmas" and "Psycho IV: The Beginning."

She is survived by her husband, David Glen Eisley, her three children and a grandson.

Sportscaster Greg Gumbel dies from cancer at age 78

By HALLIE GOLDEN
Associated Press

Greg Gumbel, a longtime CBS sportscaster who broke barriers during his career calling some of the biggest sporting events, has died from cancer, according to a statement from his family released by the network on Friday. He was 78.

"He leaves behind a legacy of love, inspiration and dedication to over 50 extraordinary years in the sports broadcast industry; and his iconic voice will never be forgotten," wife Marcy Gumbel and daughter Michelle Gumbel said in a statement.

In March, Gumbel missed his first NCAA Tournament since 1997 due to what he said at the time were family health issues.

Gumbel was the studio host for CBS since returning to the network from NBC in 1998. Gumbel signed an extension with CBS last year that allowed him to continue hosting college basketball while stepping back from NFL announcing duties.

In 2001, he announced Super Bowl 35 for CBS, becoming the first Black announcer in the U.S. to call play-by-play of a major sports championship.

David Berson, president and CEO of CBS Sports, described Gumbel as someone who broke barriers and set standards for others during his years as a voice for fans in sports, including in the NFL and March Madness.

"A tremendous broadcaster and gifted storyteller, Greg led one of the most remarkable and groundbreaking sports broadcasting careers of all time," Berson said.

Gumbel had two stints at CBS, leaving the network for NBC when it lost football in 1994 and returning when it regained the contract in 1998.

Sean McManus said of all the moves he made in his nearly 27 1/2 years leading CBS Sports, one of his proudest was bringing Gumbel back.

"Not only did he elevate our NFL and NCAA coverage to a new level, but his kindness, generosity, sense of humor and unselfishness were second to none. When he was around, he made everyone from the researchers to the technicians to the executives feel like he was their best friend," said McManus, who retired as CBS Sports chairman in April. "His love for his family was always the foundation of his life. There will never be another Greg Gumbel, and our industry and this world is a sadder place without him."

Gumbel hosted CBS' coverage of the 1992 and 1994 Winter Olympics and called Major League Baseball games during its four-year run broadcasting the national pastime. In 1995, he hosted the world figure skating championships and the following year hosted NBC's daytime coverage of the Atlanta Summer Olympics.

AP

Greg Gumbel, left, watches as Connecticut head coach Jim Calhoun talks to Butler head coach Brad Stevens, right, prior to taping a television interview for the men's NCAA Final Four college basketball championship game Sunday, April 3, 2011, in Houston.

But it was football and basketball where he was best known and made his biggest impact. Gumbel hosted CBS' NFL studio show, "The NFL Today," from 1990 to 1993 and again in 2004-05.

Earlier this year, Gumbel recalled replacing Brent Musburger as host of "The NFL Today" in 1990, describing it as intimidating and daunting.

"The fact that I got to sit in the same chair and do the same thing or try to do the same thing that he did was an incredible honor," he said.

Gumbel also called NFL games as the network's lead play-by-play announcer from 1998 to 2003, including Super Bowl 35 and 38. He returned to the NFL booth in 2005, leaving that role after the 2022 season.

"Like all who knew and loved him, I too am saddened by his death, yet also so very grateful to have known him in my life," Clark Kellogg, a CBS Sports college basketball game and studio analyst, said in a statement. "What a gift to be touched by such a good man and partner."

Gumbel was the older brother of Bryant Gumbel, the host of NBC's "Today" show and "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel" on HBO. Bryant Gumbel received a lifetime achievement award at the Sports Emmys in 2003.

Parents work on messaging for teen's medical issues

DEAR ABBY: After several months of weight loss, our preteen daughter was hospitalized after a trip to the ER. She was diagnosed with ARFID. It's an eating disorder we had never heard of but one in which the patient is NOT deliberately losing weight or attempting to change their body.

We canceled a vacation and have taken time off work to circle the wagons and care for her. This has caused questions from our friends, acquaintances, co-workers and extended family, which we have been ducking.

As a former sufferer of an eating disorder, my wife is reluctant to let anyone outside our inner circle know what is going on and risk our daughter beginning middle school with the stigma of an eating disorder. But we need to say something to the people in our lives who know something is wrong and ask what's going on and where we've been.

What should we tell people to preserve our daughter's privacy while acknowledging that not everything is OK? I thought something like, "My daughter is having stomach problems (true) and lost a bunch of weight (true), and the doctors are trying to figure out what's going on," but my wife is concerned that even mentioning weight is going to be stigmatizing.

She is advocating telling people our daughter is malnourished (also true), but to me, this will lead people to draw conclusions that are both too close to home and inaccurate. Please advise.

NAVIGATING THIS IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR NAVIGATING: I wish your daughter a complete recovery. Her weight loss will be obvious to anyone who sees her. If I were doing the explaining, I'd shorten the message, eliminating the "lost a bunch of weight" to something like, "Our daughter is having stomach issues. She's under a doctor's care, and her team is figuring out what's going on." Period.

■■■

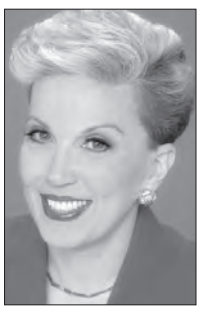
DEAR ABBY: I have a neighbor who gossips about our other neighbors. She tells me if a man comes to visit our neighbor across the street and if he spends the night. She's always asking me where they are going and what they are doing. I told her I don't know because I don't pay attention to what other people are doing.

This neighbor has now started calling me if I go out and wants to know where I went. If I go to the doctor, she asks me why. If I have work being done at my home, she asks how much I paid for it. If I'm out more than a few hours, she asks where I was for so long.

I am a private person, and I will tell someone if I want them to know. She even comes outside and starts pulling weeds if I have company. I don't know how to deal with her.

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

PRIVATE IN WEST VIRGINIA

DEAR PRIVATE: Deal with this nosy woman by telling her if it was any of her business, she would already know the answer to her incessant, intrusive questions. Avoid her as much as possible. If your across-the-street neighbor doesn't already know, warn her that this person is invading her privacy and repeating every detail she observes to anyone who will listen.

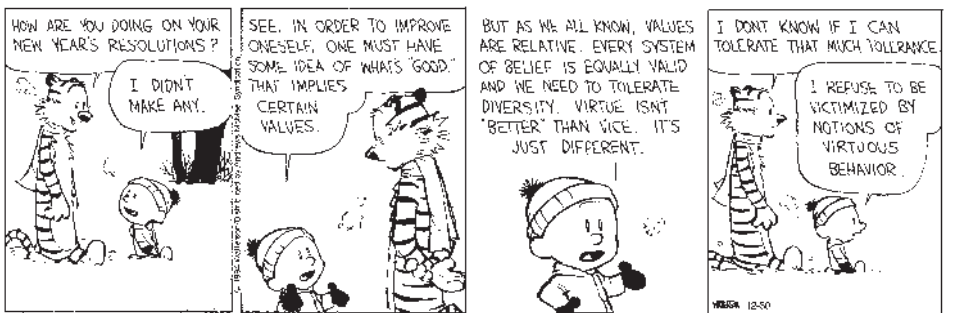
■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

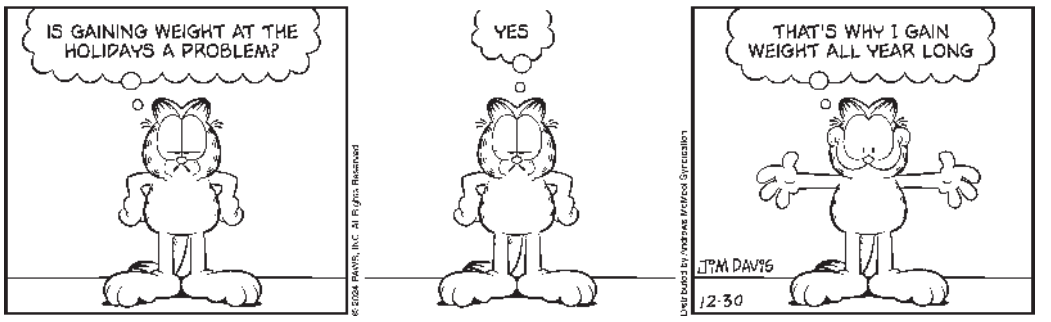
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HOW ARE YOU DOING ON YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS?
I DIDN'T MAKE ANY.
SEE. IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ONESELF, ONE MUST HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT'S "GOOD." THAT IMPLIES CERTAIN VALUES.
BUT AS WE ALL KNOW, VALUES ARE RELATIVE. EVERY SYSTEM OF BELIEF IS EQUALLY VALID AND WE NEED TO TOLERATE DIVERSITY. VIRTUE ISN'T "BETTER" THAN VICE. IT'S JUST DIFFERENT.
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TOLERATE THAT MUCH TOLERANCE.
I REFUSE TO BE VICTIMIZED BY NOTIONS OF VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOR.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



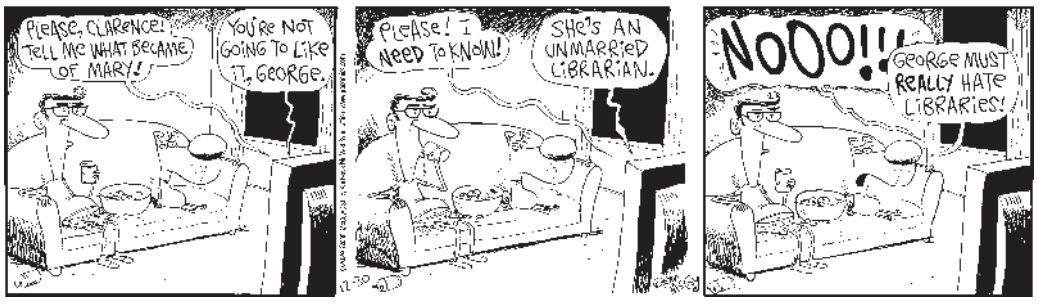
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

YOU OKAY?
YEAH. I JUST HATE WORKING THIS HARD DURING THE HOLIDAYS.
THIS SHOULD BE FAMILY TIME.
I SHOULD BE NAPPING. OR READING. OR HANGING OUT AT THE COFFEE SHOP.
NONE OF THOSE INVOLVE THE FAMILY.
BUT YOU GET WHAT I MEAN.
12-30

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


PLEASE, CLARENCE! TELL ME WHAT BECAME OF MARY!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT, GEORGE.
PLEASE! I NEED TO KNOW!
SHE'S AN UNMARRIED LIBRARIAN.
NOOO!!
GEORGE MUST REALLY HATE LIBRARIES!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Jolly laugh
5 Resort
8 Lugosi of film
12 Semisoft cheese
14 Corp. bigwig
15 Gas station store, often
16 Lovers' quarrel
17 "Shoo!"
18 Camera settings
20 Emulate Monet
23 Metric weight
24 Bloodline sharers
25 Permitted
28 "How — you doing?"
29 Crabby type
30 White wine cocktail
32 Caribbean island
34 Architect Saarinen
35 Author Wiesel
36 Awaited
37 Breath mint brand
40 Texas tea
41 Former Dallas QB Tony
42 Barista's designs
47 Heaps
48 Respected
49 Long hair
50 — Paulo
51 Agrees silently

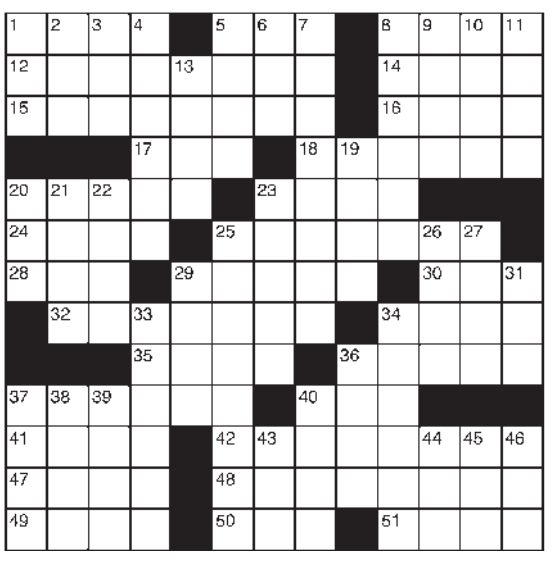
DOWN

1 "Let me think ..."
2 Parisian "yes"
3 Layer
4 Burger toppings
5 Sports figure?
6 Part of MPH
7 Some indie movies
8 Give
9 Big fair, for short
10 Bound
11 Play parts
13 Lewd material
19 Sty chow
20 Unpaid TV ad
21 Broadcasts
22 "Yeah, right"
23 1971 Jane Fonda film
25 Items
26 Scratched (out)
27 Tragic
29 Arizona river
31 Scepter
33 Perfumery compound
34 Brennan in "Clue"
36 Take the bait
37 Streetcar
38 Teeny bit
39 "Let's go!"
40 "Beetle Bailey" dog
43 Simile words
44 I love (Lat.)
45 Scarlet
46 NFL six-pointers

Solution time: 21 mins.

R	I	P		C	H	O	P		A	R	K	S
U	F	O		A	A	R	E		B	O	O	T
B	A	K	E	S	H	O	P		B	O	N	A
		E	V	E	S			S	O	F	A	R
C	U	B	E	S		S	P	O	T			
A	R	O	N		S	H	O	P	T	A	L	K
N	S	W		P	A	R	I	S		L	E	I
I	A	L	K	O	V	E	R		A	M	A	I
			A	N	C	W		P	H	A	S	E
D	R	U	I	D			R	O	A	N		
R	I	B	S		O	V	E	R	B	A	K	E
A	T	E	E		W	E	N	T		C	O	O
G	A	R	A		N	E	T	S		S	I	S

Last Friday's answer 12-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eliza Dushku, 44; Tyrese Gibson, 46; Laila Ali, 47; Meredith Vieira, 71.

Happy Birthday: Plan, and you won't be disappointed. Map out your course, choose your objectives and head in a direction that will satisfy your soul. Discipline and hard work will pay off, so don't let laziness or the temptations others offer stand between you and the goals you want to achieve. Put your energy into what matters most; the payoff will buy you the comfort and joy you want and deserve. Your numbers are 9, 14, 22, 26, 34, 41, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Go over every detail before deciding how to end one year and begin another. A professional or financial change looks promising, but it's up to you to ask questions and position yourself strategically to ensure you end up where you feel comfortable. Leave nothing to chance or unfinished. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Learn from your mistakes and make minor adjustments to ensure you don't drag negative aspects of your life into the upcoming year. It's time to broaden your awareness and consider what's possible. Don't saddle yourself with sticking to what others expect or want; do what works best for you. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Refuse to let uncertainty bring you down. Be open to suggestions and let your charm lead the way, and you'll attract people who offer hope for a brighter future. Sum up your options, verify their validity and start putting your plan for 2025 in place. Self-improvement is favored. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Refusing to stay put when moving forward will give you the momentum you need to get ahead. Embrace what life offers and seize the moment by taking advantage of whatever comes your way. You only know once you try, so stop procrastinating; live in the moment and make things happen. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Evaluate your situation and make your dream a reality. Try something new or pick up skills to help you succeed professionally. Share ideas and volunteer your time and expertise, but only offer to donate what you can afford. Be wary of situations that pose a health risk. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Once you're satisfied that everything is in its place and you feel free to do as you please, you can let down your guard and put on your dancing shoes. Prepare to end one year and start another by celebrating what you've accomplished and what you plan to do next. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Establish what you want. Question motives, emotions and your current lifestyle, and consider the changes you want. Broaden your horizons by engaging in events or activities that will give you a unique perspective regarding what's available to you. Focus on personal improvements, peace of mind and love. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You don't have to take on burdens alone. Reach out to those you have helped in the past or an expert who can point you in the right direction. Better health care and wealth management are favored. Leave nothing to chance; don't act in haste or let anger lead the way. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Bide your time, wait and watch for signs, and choose an appropriate time to discuss what concerns you. A change is overdue, and taking a less orthodox approach will satisfy your need for something new and exciting. Love, romance and updating your image will boost your confidence. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take care of business to ensure you take advantage of year-end benefits and offers that can help you head into next year feeling good about new beginnings and what you can gain. Refuse to let your emotions cost you. Don't buy into someone's demands that put you in a vulnerable position. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Pay attention to meaningful relationships and step up and do something nice for someone you love. Your gesture will positively impact your lifestyle and the changes to come next year. It's time to commit long term; plant seeds and see what transpires. You've got nothing to lose. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Be receptive, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. Listen carefully and subscribe only to what benefits you. An offer will not be as solid as it appears. Get what you want in writing before you commit. A change of scenery will offer a unique perspective regarding what's possible. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are driven, opportunistic and spontaneous. You are possessive and careful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

4		5	9				8	2
7		9						
1		2		6		7	3	
	5					4		3
		4			6	8	2	
3				8	2		7	5
	2	1		4	5	3		7
	4		6	7		2		
		7		1		5	4	

Difficulty: ★ 12/30

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

5	2	1	3	8	6	4	9	7
9	7	4	5	1	2	8	3	6
3	6	8	9	4	7	5	1	2
7	5	9	8	2	4	3	6	1
1	8	3	6	9	5	7	2	4
2	4	6	1	7	3	9	8	5
8	3	7	2	5	1	6	4	9
6	1	5	4	3	9	2	7	8
4	9	2	7	6	8	1	5	3

Difficulty: ★★★★ 12/27

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'JURY DUTY' (TV SERIES) **Solution: 9 letters**

E	I	N	N	A	E	J	D	D	O	T	R	I	A	L
G	Y	R	E	V	O	C	S	I	D	E	R	I	H	E
D	R	K	D	E	R	E	T	S	E	U	Q	E	S	E
U	U	O	S	Ⓔ	H	C	T	U	R	C	X	H	S	E
J	J	R	T	T	Ⓜ	K	A	E	R	B	A	N	O	I
A	N	U	I	C	I	Ⓜ	C	O	T	U	O	U	R	S
M	I	E	M	L	A	N	Ⓨ	A	N	M	H	Y	A	E
E	V	S	S	O	U	R	P	W	M	R	H	H	L	N
S	O	A	M	S	T	R	T	U	I	O	A	N	A	B
M	I	L	I	I	I	O	S	N	T	T	O	E	N	E
A	R	A	T	N	V	I	D	E	O	S	N	K	R	R
R	D	R	H	G	A	M	B	L	E	C	E	E	O	G
D	I	B	F	O	R	E	P	E	R	S	O	N	S	M
E	R	E	G	O	L	D	E	N	G	L	O	V	E	S
N	E	D	D	A	L	G	D	L	A	N	O	R	N	G

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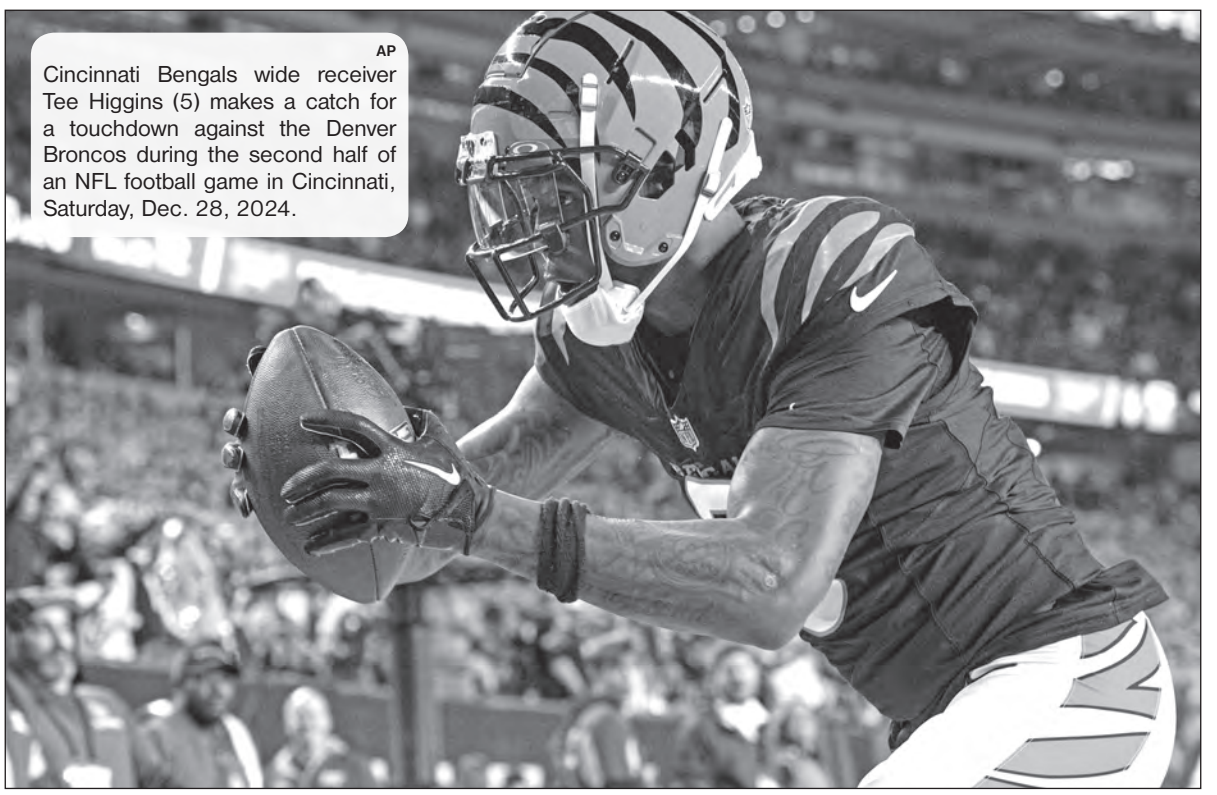
Alan Rosen, Break, Closing, Contractor, Crutches, Debra, Discovery, Emmy, Foreperson, Gamble, Gene, Gladden, Golden Gloves, Hired, Hoax, Injury, James, Jeannie, Judge, Ken Hyun, La Seur, Lee Eisenberg, Marden, Noah, Pat, Ravi, Ronald, Ross, Sequestered, Shaun, Stupnitsky, Summons, Tim Smith, Todd, Trial, Video, Voir Dire, Witness

Last Friday's answer : Banana

The NEW Volume 77 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Burrow throws 3-yard TD pass to Higgins in OT as Bengals beat Broncos



AP

Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Tee Higgins (5) makes a catch for a touchdown against the Denver Broncos during the second half of an NFL football game in Cincinnati, Saturday, Dec. 28, 2024.

CINCINNATI (AP)—This time, near the very end of a mostly agonizing season, the Cincinnati Bengals made enough plays to win.

A familiar connection closed it out.

Joe Burrow threw his third touchdown pass to Tee Higgins with 1:07 left in overtime, and the Bengals kept their slim playoff hopes alive with a wild 30-24 win over the Denver Broncos on Saturday.

"This is one of the crazy ones I've been involved with in the NFL," Burrow said. "It feels like we had a couple of those this year, and it's nice to come out on top in one."

After Denver's second punt in overtime, Burrow completed a 31-yard pass to Higgins to the Denver 3, and then went back to the lanky receiver for the final play in Cincinnati's fourth consecutive victory. Higgins finished with 11 receptions for 131 yards.

Cade York had a chance to win it for Cincinnati with about three minutes left in overtime, but his 33-yard field goal bounced off the left upright. Denver then went three-and-out, including a Bo Nix incompletion on third down, handing the ball right back to Burrow and the Bengals (8-8).

"Tough one to lose," Denver coach Sean Payton said. "We had our opportunities. The will to compete and answer, it was pretty impressive. In the end, we didn't make enough plays, and they did."

It was the Bengals' first win this season against a team with a winning record. They need another victory in their final game at Pittsburgh and some help from other teams to make it to the postseason for the first time since 2022.

"We know we can hang with anybody," Burrow said. "We've proven that this year. We played everybody this year close. It's just about making the plays down the stretch to win those games. Today we did. The last four weeks we have. We've got to continue to do it."

The Broncos (9-7) would have secured an AFC wild card with a victory over the Bengals. They'll have another opportunity to earn a postseason berth when they host Kansas City next weekend. A victory over the Chiefs also would eliminate the Bengals.

Burrow continued his stellar season, going 39 for 49 for 412 yards and three touchdowns, all to Higgins. Ja'Marr Chase finished with nine receptions for 102 yards.

Burrow has at least 250 yards passing and three touchdowns in eight straight games, extending his NFL record.

"I don't know that anybody can stand on the field and watch Joe Burrow and say he's not the best player in the world," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said.

Burrow's 1-yard touchdown run gave Cincinnati a 24-17 lead with 1:29 left in regulation. On the play before Burrow's TD, Chase Brown hurt his right ankle on an awkward slide while going down in an effort to help the Bengals run out the remaining time.

Brown's injury stopped the clock, and Nix threw a spectacular 25-yard touchdown pass to a leaping Marvin Mims Jr. for the tying score with 8 seconds left.

Nix was 24 for 31 for 219 yards and three touchdowns with one interception. Mims finished with eight catches for 103 yards and two TDs.

The big three

Burrow made full use of his two featured receivers. Burrow, Higgins and Chase made life difficult for the Broncos all game long.

"I just throw it where the defense tells me to," Burrow said. "If they're going to double Ja'Marr, I'm going to throw it to Tee. If Ja'Marr is going to get a one-on-one, I'm going to throw it to him."

Both receivers are in interesting contract situations. Chase was the NFL leader in receptions, yards receiving and receiving touchdowns going into Week 17. He is likely headed for a massive new contract that will make him one of the highest-paid receivers in the league. Higgins is playing under the franchise tag, and the Bengals may not want to pay what it will take to bring him back next season.

RAMS 13, CARDINALS 9

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Ahkello Witherspoon made a diving interception on a deflected pass in the end zone with 37 seconds to play, and the Los Angeles Rams barely maintained command of the NFC West race with a 13-9 victory over the Arizona Cardinals on Saturday night.

Puka Nacua had 129 yards receiving and Kyren Williams scored the only touchdown for the Rams (10-6), who grinded through a difficult offensive night and survived a hair-raising fourth quarter for their fifth consecutive victory.

The Rams host Seattle (9-7) in their regular-season finale next weekend, but they could already have coach Sean McVay's fourth division title clinched before then.

If the Bills, Browns, Vikings, Commanders and 49ers combine for three wins—or two wins and a tie—over the next two days, Los Angeles will be NFC West champions based on its strength of schedule, no matter what happens against Seattle.

If the Rams don't get that strength-of-schedule help this week, they're still in command of the division race: The Seahawks will have to beat the Rams and get help from multiple teams to claim the West while denying the Rams' sixth playoff berth in eight seasons under McVay.

The Rams narrowly avoided a winner-take-all finale against Seattle by holding off the Cardinals, who played a tremendous defensive game one week after getting eliminated from playoff contention.

Kyler Murray passed for 321 yards and threw two late interceptions for Arizona (7-9), which managed just three points out of three drives into Rams territory in the fourth quarter.

Arizona drove to the Los Angeles 5 in the final minute, but when Murray's first-down pass deflected off tight end Trey McBride's helmet, Witherspoon made a fingertip interception in the end zone that was upheld by video review.

Matthew Stafford, who passed for 189 yards, ran out the clock on the Rams' ninth win in 11 games since their bye.

McBride made both his 100th reception and his first touchdown catch of the season for Arizona, which has lost five of six. McBride had 12 catches for 123 yards, and Marvin Harrison Jr. had 96 yards receiving.

Williams' 14th rushing TD of the season 3:23 before halftime opened the scoring and capped the Rams' first good drive.

Arizona finally scored midway through the third quarter on a 1-yard catch by McBride, who finally scored his first touchdown on his 98th catch of the season. He is the 10th tight end in NFL history to catch 100 passes in a season.

The Cardinals got to 10-9 early in the fourth quarter with Chad Ryland's short field goal after their second straight impressive drive. Rams rookie Joshua Karty made his second field goal with 6:41 left to cap a 7 1/2-minute drive.

Arizona drove to the Rams 40, but the drive stalled before rookie Kam Kinchens intercepted Murray's heave to the goal line with 3:02 left. But Kinchens cost the Rams 40 yards of field position by returning it to the 11 instead of batting it down, and the Rams' offense punted the ball back to the Cards just 1:01 later.

Hoecht's swat

Michael Hoecht blocked Arizona's extra-point attempt in the third quarter. The linebacker leads the NFL this season with three blocked kicks, the second-most in Rams history.

CHARGERS 40, PATRIOTS 7

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—As spontaneous celebrations rippled throughout the Los Angeles Chargers' locker room after their resounding 40-7 win over the New England Patriots, coach Jim Harbaugh grabbed general manager Joe Hortiz and wrapped him up in a bear hug.

"Love you!" Harbaugh said.

"Love you!" Hortiz responded.

"Great job! Let's keep it going," Harbaugh replied, finally loosening his grasp.

The Chargers (10-6) are back in the playoffs. But the message is clear: They have their eyes on achieving much more.

Justin Herbert threw three touchdown passes and Los Angeles locked up its second playoff appearance in three seasons with Saturday's victory.

"We had a good opportunity tonight and we went out and took it," Herbert said. "We had a good plan. All week we knew how big of a game this was for us. Guys were dialed in, focused and we executed today."

It also secured the fourth postseason appearance in Harbaugh's five seasons as an NFL coach, adding to the three he made during his stint with the San Francisco 49ers.

"You talk to them and there's more to do," Harbaugh said. "There's no coach who could have it better than to be coaching these players. Nobody. Maybe the only person would be future us, could have it better than us."

Herbert finished 26 of 38 for 281 yards to become the third player in NFL history with at least 3,000 passing yards and 20 touchdown passes in each of his first five seasons. He joins Pro Football Hall of Famer Peyton Manning and Russell Wilson.

Ladd McConkey had eight catches for 94 yards and pulled in TD throws of 6 and 40 yards. With a 10-yard reception in the second quarter, he passed 1,000 yards receiving for the season, making him the third Chargers rookie receiver to reach that milestone.

JK Dobbins rushed 19 times for 76 yards and a TD.

The Patriots (3-13) have lost six straight games, their second such losing streak of the season. They are now 2-14 the last two seasons at home.

"We just didn't play well enough in any phase of the game," coach Jerod Mayo said. "No complementary football, and that's what you get."

Asked if he thinks he is coaching for his job, Mayo said it comes with the territory.

"I'm always under pressure and it's been that way for a very long time, not just when I became the head coach of the Patriots," he said.

New England quarterback Drake Maye finished 12 of 22 for 117 yards and a touchdown. He became the first rookie quarterback in franchise history with a TD pass in eight straight games. But he was sacked four times, and a second-quarter fumble marked his eighth straight game with at least one turnover.

Los Angeles outgained New England 428-181 for the game.

Maye briefly left the game to be evaluated for a head injury following a blow to his helmet in the first quarter.

He was scrambling near the sideline on third down of the Patriots' first possession when he was hit by Chargers cornerback Cam Hart, jarring the ball loose as Maye spun out of bounds.

No flag was thrown on the play and Maye stayed down on the turf for several seconds before eventually getting up and jogging off the field. He initially sat on the bench before going to the medical tent for evaluation.

He was replaced by backup Jacoby Brissett in the next series, which ended in a punt. But after further evaluation in the locker room and a Cameron Dicker 27-yard field goal put the Chargers in front 10-0, Maye returned to the game for the Patriots' third series, at the 10:15 mark of the second quarter.

Maye scrambled for 9 yards on his first play back, ending with him being hit by linebacker Junior Colson as he slid to the ground. Colson was flagged for unnecessary roughness.

Five plays later, Maye mistimed a toss to Demario Douglas, causing a fumble that was recovered by Derwin James.

The Chargers took over on the New England 24 and nine plays later, Herbert connected with McConkey for a 6-yard touchdown pass to put Los Angeles in front 17-0.

Gilgeous-Alexander leads Thunder past Hornets for 10th straight win

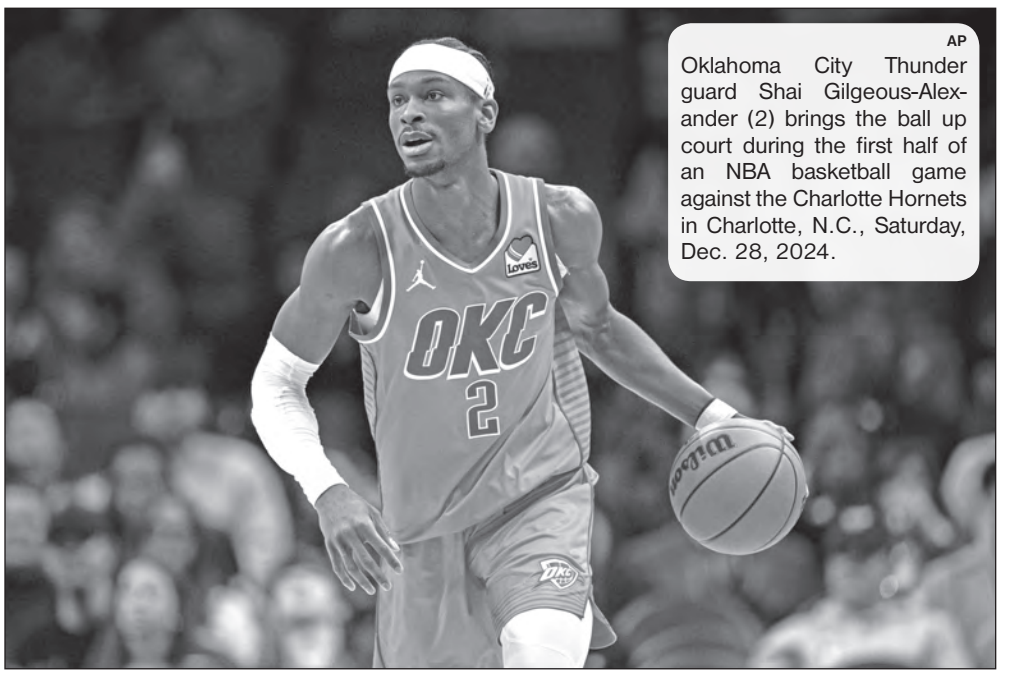
CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 22 points, Jalen Williams added 20 points and Oklahoma City beat Charlotte for their 10th straight regular-season win.

Aaron Wiggins added 17 points and Isaiah Hartenstein had 12 points and 15 rebounds for the Thunder, who never trailed.

Miles Bridges had 19 points and 10 rebounds, while Vasa Micic added 16 points for the Hornets, who have lost 15 of their last 16 games.

Both teams were missing multiple starters with LaMelo Ball and Brandon Miller sitting out for Charlotte and Luguentz Dort and Cason Wallace out for the Thunder.

Oklahoma City bolted to a 61-46 halftime lead with Gilgeous-Alexander and Wiggins combining for 26 points on 11-of-17 shooting. The Thunder extended the lead to 20 in the third quarter and were never truly challenged again.



AP

Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) brings the ball up court during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Charlotte Hornets in Charlotte, N.C., Saturday, Dec. 28, 2024.

HAWKS 120, HEAT 110

ATLANTA (AP)—Jalen Johnson scored 28 points and the Atlanta Hawks closed out a four-game homestand, winning a third straight contest, 120-110 over the Miami Heat on Saturday.

Trae Young added his 22nd double-double of the season, with 11 point and 15 assist, and De'Andre Hunter scored 26 points in his 14th consecutive game with at least 15 points coming off the bench.

Tyler Herro scored 28 points and dished out 10 assists and Bam Adebayo added 17 points and 10 rebounds. It was the Heat's fourth game in a row without star Jimmy Butler, who sat out for what the team called "return to competition reconditioning."

KNICKS 136, WIZARDS 132, OT

WASHINGTON (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored nine of his season-high 55 points in overtime and Karl-Anthony Towns had 30 points and 14 rebounds as New York extended their season-long winning streak to seven games in a win over Washington.

It was the first overtime game for both teams, and New York outscored Washington 17-13 in the extra period.

Brunson, who scored 42 points after halftime, had two jump shots and hit five free throws in overtime.

Justin Champagnie scored a career-high 31 points with 10 rebounds and Malcolm Brogdon added 22 as the Wizards failed to win their second straight game after beating the Hornets 113-110 on Thursday.

Playing without leading scorer Jordan Poole, who was out with a bruised left hip, Washington led for most of the game but committed 17 turnovers, which resulted in 26 New York points.

BULLS 116, BUCKS 111

CHICAGO (AP)—Josh Giddey had 23 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists for his second triple-double this season to lead Chicago to a win over Milwaukee.

Giddey, who missed the previous four games with an ankle injury, sank two free throws with 10 seconds left to make it 115-111, then pulled down a rebound to help seal it as Chicago snapped a three-game losing streak.

Nikola Vucevic had 23 points and 13 rebounds. Coby White, who scored 22, nailed a tiebreaking jumper with 32 seconds remaining.

Damian Lillard returned to the lineup with 29 points and 12 assists, but the Bucks dropped their second straight. The star guard came on with 18 points in the second half as Milwaukee played without NBA scoring leader Giannis Antetokounmpo (illness) for a fourth consecutive game.

Brook Lopez had 22 points and Khris Middleton scored 17 of his 21 in the first half. Middleton appeared to hurt his ankle and played sparingly in the second half before hitting two key baskets late.

The Bulls led 62-60 at halftime after opening a pair of 13-point leads.

WARRIORS 109, SUNS 105

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Jonathan Kuminga had 34 points and made the go-ahead free throw in Golden State's win over Phoenix.

With the Warriors down one, Kuminga was fouled after getting inside positioning on Kevin Durant on an out-of-bounds play with 29 seconds to go. Kuminga made both free throws to put Golden State ahead and tie his career high in points a day after setting it against the Clippers on Friday.

Durant, who led the Suns with 31 points, missed a shot on the other end, and Dennis Schroder made two free throws after the Suns committed a loose ball foul on the rebound.

Phoenix led 65-61 at halftime. Stephen Curry, who had 22 points, beat the first-half buzzer with a one-handed, off-balance floater over seven-footer Oso Ighodaro after going behind the back to split two defenders.

NUGGETS 134, PISTONS 121

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 37 points, Jamal Murray scored 21 of his 34 points in a decisive third period, and Denver survived Detroit's fourth-quarter rally to win.

Michael Porter Jr. finished with 26 points for Denver, which used an 18-4 run to take the lead for good at halftime and then opened a 25-point lead heading into the fourth. Murray scored 12 points in the final 2:27 of the period to give him his first 30-point game of the season.

Cade Cunningham and Jaden Ivey scored 17 points each to lead Detroit.

With the starters on the bench in the fourth quarter, the Pistons cut a 25-point deficit to 10 and forced Denver coach Michael Malone to put his starters back in. Ronald Holland's 3-pointer made it 128-121 with 2:35 left but Jokic closed it out with six straight points.

76ERS 114, JAZZ 111

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Joel Embiid and Tyrese Maxey each scored 32 points to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to a 114-111 victory over the Utah Jazz on Saturday night.

Embiid went 11 of 13 from the free-throw line to rally the 76ers from a 14-point first-half deficit for their ninth victory in 12 games. Paul George had a season-high five steals to go along with 13 points.

Utah trailed by 11 early in the second half before rallying, but the 76ers took a 110-108 lead with 1:38 left on back-to-back baskets from Maxey and Embiid. Lauri Markkanen cut the deficit to 112-111 on a 3-pointer with 4.1 seconds remaining, but Maxey sealed the win with two free throws.

Markkanen led the Jazz with 23 points. Collin Sexton and Brice Sensabaugh added 20 apiece.

Utah shot 54% from the field in the first quarter and led 42-28 early in the second following back-to-back layups from Sexton and Sensabaugh. Philadelphia erased the deficit before halftime behind a 24-5 run spanning six minutes, taking a 52-47 lead when Embiid punctuated the run with a pair of baskets.

TRAIL BLAZERS 126, MAVERICKS 122

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Shaedon Sharpe had 23 points, Anfernee Simons scored 22 and the Portland Trail Blazers held off the Dallas Mavericks 126-122 on Saturday night.

Deandre Ayton had 21 points, 16 rebounds and three blocks and Deni Avdija had 21 points, five rebounds and five assists. Scoot Henderson had 19 points, four rebounds, six assists and a career-high five steals off the bench.

Kyrie Irving led all scorers with 46 points and was the only consistent offensive threat for the Mavericks who were playing without Naji Marshall, PJ Washington—suspended for their involvement in an on-court fight against the Suns—Luka Doncic and Dereck Lively II.

Irving had 20 points in the fourth quarter as Dallas tried to mount a comeback that ultimately fell short.

LAKERS 132, KINGS 122

LOS ANGELES (AP)— The Los Angeles Lakers beat the Kings 132-122 on Saturday night sweeping them in the season series 4-0.

Anthony Davis scored 36 points with 15 rebounds and eight assists. Austin Reaves ended with 26 points, a career-high 16 assists and six rebounds. Rui Hachimura went 4-5 from behind the arc, scoring 21 points with four rebounds and two blocks.

With LeBron James out, Gabe Vincent replaced him in the starting five. Unfortunately, he suffered an oblique strain and was out for the rest of the game after only playing six minutes. Max Christie ended with 16 points. Dalton Knecht had 18 points.

Austin started things off with five straight points. AD jumped in, making all five of his first shot attempts. Max contributed with two 3-pointers. Former Laker Malik Monk was cooking early, going three for four from the field, which included two threes. At the first timeout, L.A. was up five.

Kings fire coach Mike Brown less than halfway through his 3rd season

By JOSH DUBOW
AP Sports Writer

The Sacramento Kings have fired coach Mike Brown less than halfway through his third season with the team mired in a five-game losing streak.

General manager Monte McNair called the move Friday a "difficult decision" and thanked Brown for his work. Assistant Doug Christie will take over as interim coach, with his first game coming Saturday night at the Los Angeles Lakers.

Brown was the unanimous choice for NBA Coach of the Year in his first season in 2022-23, when he helped Sacramento end the longest playoff drought in NBA history at 16 seasons.

But Sacramento lost in the play-in tournament last year and was off to a 13-18 start this season, leading to the move to fire Brown about six months after he agreed to a contract extension through the 2026-27 season.

The Kings have lost an NBA-worst nine games this season after leading in the fourth quarter with the worst one coming in Brown's final game as coach Thursday night against Detroit.

Sacramento led by 10 points with less than three minutes to play only to collapse down the stretch. Jaden Ivey converted a four-point play with 3 seconds left when he made a 3-pointer in the right corner and was fouled by De'Aaron Fox. That gave the Pistons a 114-113 win, leaving the Kings in 12th place in the Western Conference.

The Kings came into the season with hopes of finishing in the top six in the West and avoiding the play-in tournament after acquiring DeMar DeRozan in a sign-and-trade deal over the summer to add to a core that featured Fox, Domanta Sabonis and Keegan Murray.

Fox, who is in the second-to-last year of his five-year, $163 million contract, declined to sign an extension in the offseason. He said on a podcast with Draymond Green earlier this month that he wanted to be on a team that could "compete at a high level."

Sacramento has been far from that this season, thanks in large part to an NBA-worst 3-11 record in games decided by five points or fewer. Brown publicly criticized Fox for his role in the game-winning play Thursday night, saying he should have been closer to Ivey instead of committing a foul on a close out.

"You should be hugged up to your man at the 3-point line," Brown said. "Everybody should, and why there was a closeout by Fox, I'm not sure. I got to go back and watch the tape. But for sure 100% we told our guys, can't give up a 3, can't give up a 3, can't give up a 3, stay on the high side, stay on the high side."

Brown has a 107-88 record in two-plus seasons in Sacramento with a winning record in both of his full seasons. Rick Adelman is the only other coach to post a winning record in a full season since the Kings moved to Sacramento

Brown previously had two stints as coach in Cleveland and spent one-plus season as Lakers coach. He has a 455-304 record and has made the playoffs in seven of his nine full seasons. He won Coach of the Year twice, also getting the award in Cleveland in 2008-09.

Christie will be the team's eighth coach since owner Vivek Ranadive took over before the 2013-14 season. The Kings have the fourth-worst record in the NBA and the fewest playoff berths with just one during Ranadive's ownership.

Velasco, Barbo, Corotan, Valino place in age group

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

Saipan cyclists Arvin Velasco, Wilfredo Barbo, Ponce Corotan, and Rusty Valino managed to finish in the Top 3 of their age groups in the Guam Cycling Federation's Tour of Guam 2024 held last Dec. 15.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Arvin Velasco came in second in the 30-39 age group of last Dec. 15's Tour of Guam 2024.

Velasco finished second in the 30-39 division of the 104-kilometer course with a time of 3:14:20.

"Being runner-up for my age group was just a bonus. My goal always was to beat my previous time last year and I did it by 18 minutes which is a very big improvement. The Guam course was really nice except for the road conditions, but overall, I really like it. Weather was perfect until the last half when it started raining. The hardest part was when it started raining and we're about to go downhill. It was all slippery and the wind was so strong. I think there's no easy part in the race," he said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Wilfredo Barbo and Ponce Corotan stand atop the podium after finishing second and third in last Dec. 15's Tour of Guam 2024.

The 31-year-old nurse at the Commonwealth Health Center's dialysis unit dedicated his Top 3 finish first to God then to his family, and then to all Saipan cyclists.

"It's such an honor to represent Saipan whenever we go to Guam!"

Barbo and Corotan, meanwhile, came in second and third in the 60-69 long course with times of 4:16:41 and 4:38:24, respectively.

The former said his conditioning was better this year because he managed to shave some time off his previous best. He added that the rain also helped his cause, but said the headwind was still a problem all throughout the race.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rusty Valino came in third in the 50-59 age group's short course of last Dec. 15's Tour of Guam 2024.

Corotan, for his part, said he left stronger during this race but somehow finished with a slower time perhaps due to the leg cramps he suffered during the last 25 kilometers of the race. He also said his rear tire lost some air at the end part, which perhaps also contributed to his slower time.

"The weather during the race was very good when we took off as it was partly sunny. I want to dedicate this race to NMICF who hosted our participation and to all our cycling group members on Saipan especially our president Jay Diyco," he said.

He said he hopes to join the Tour of Guam again next year as it's always a fun experience.

Both Barbo and Corotan then thanked Saipan Cycling Association, Northern Marianas Cycling Federation, and Saipan Unity Lions Club for all their support.

Valino, meanwhile, came in third in the 50-59 age group of the 43-km short course after crossing the finish line in 1:29:32.

The Atkins Kroll staff dedicated his win to his wife, who gave him an early Christmas gift by buying Valino a spanking new Giant TCR di2 2025 just prior to taking part in the Tour of Guam.

AGAPE

From page 16

of 1:42.10. Second place in the women's was Heather Brook at 1:50.27, and third place went to An Bang with a time of 2:11.02.

Muldoon, an Emergency Department physician at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and public health consultant, said of her firstplace win, "It was an incredible honor to cross the finish line first in today's holiday half-marathon. I've had the privilege of calling Saipan my running home since 2019. This race is particularly close to my heart because of the wonderful community spirit and the incredible range of participants—young and old—who come out to celebrate fitness and camaraderie."

Prior to her solo adventures this year, she's competed in the relay race over the years and won first place with her team "Baby Got Track" in 2022. This year, she said she decided to take on the solo race as part of her training, admitting that "it's even more fun to cover more miles!"

Muldoon returned to Saipan after 10 months of working in California and said "it feels amazing to be back in my favorite place in the world. Running through Saipan's beautiful roads at sunrise, with the stunning backdrop of Suicide Cliffs, reminded me why this island holds such a special place in my heart."

She added, "I was deeply inspired by the strength and determination of the female runners on the course, especially the incredible girls from Agape. After the turnaround, seeing them relay fueled my motivation. I wanted to show them—and all women—that we can rise to any challenge, and we can win."

For the first 10 miles, I ran alongside Jordan [Ruiz] and together we kept a strong pace. As the race progressed, I decided to push harder to see if I could maintain a lead. It was the thought of the women and girls in the CNMI that kept me driving forward. Their resilience and determination inspired me to finish strong, pulling ahead in the final three miles to secure the win." With that, she said, "I hope today's race serves as a reminder to young women that they are capable of achieving greatness. We can run faster, push harder, and compete with compassion and determination. Women can win, and together we can inspire the next generation of strong female athletes here in the CNMI."

She thanked Run Saipan, the volunteers, the Department of Public Safety, the participants, and supporters who made the event so memorable. "I'm so grateful to be part of this vibrant community and look forward to many more miles together on these beautiful island roads!"

She then gave a shout out to *Saipan Tribune* reporters. She said they "have been there in the early mornings on weekends for years to document our races and bring our successes to light. My heart hurts to see the Saipan Tribune closing, and I want to recognize the astounding journalists who have poured their love and dedication into documenting and celebrating race participants. Their work has been invaluable to our community, and they will be deeply missed."

First place in the men's division was Ruiz, who kept pace with Muldoon for a while before the last meters to the finish line with a time of 1:42.48. Second place was Philip Santos at 2:03.59, and third was James Abuy who crossed at 2:04.12.

Sponsors of the event are Run Saipan, Coca-Cola, and Foremost.

MAN

From page 16

ward to a fastpitch league "so we can really test our women on island besides that left to Marshalls." As for this tourney, he said, "It's a good experience for the ladies, but it would have been a lot better if we started with fastpitch. Slowpitch is already ongoing, but fastpitch is the next sport to bring up talented players on island."

For NMI Softball Association president Froilan Camacho, he said that the season "went very well. We appreciate all the teams that came out—we were expecting more teams that we're thankful to get six teams to come out, compete, and showcase their skills in softball."

As for their performances, he said, "Each team has their own unique way of playing. And I congratulate all those that put in the effort and reached the Top 5 categories."

Looking forward, he said, "we're looking to have open tryouts for the women's fastpitch team in January for the 2025 Pacific Mini Games in Palau."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	23	8	.742	–
New York	22	10	.688	1½
Philadelphia	12	17	.414	10
Brooklyn	12	19	.387	11
Toronto	7	24	.226	16
Southeast Division				
Orlando	19	14	.576	–
Atlanta	17	15	.531	1½
Miami	15	14	.517	2
Charlotte	7	24	.226	11
Washington	5	24	.172	12
Central Division				
Cleveland	27	4	.871	–
Milwaukee	16	14	.533	10½
Indiana	15	17	.469	12½
Chicago	14	18	.438	13½
Detroit	14	18	.438	13½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	22	10	.688	–
Houston	21	10	.677	½
Dallas	20	12	.625	2
San Antonio	16	15	.516	5½
New Orleans	5	27	.156	17
Northwest Division				
Oklahoma City	25	5	.833	–
Denver	17	13	.567	8
Minnesota	16	14	.533	9
Portland	11	20	.355	14½
Utah	7	23	.233	18
Pacific Division				
L.A. Lakers	18	13	.581	–
L.A. Clippers	18	13	.581	–
Golden State	16	15	.516	2
Phoenix	15	16	.484	3
Sacramento	13	19	.406	5½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Buffalo	12	3	0	.800	469	331
Miami	7	8	0	.467	305	329
e-N.Y. Jets	4	11	0	.267	292	344
e-New England	3	13	0	.188	266	401
South						
y-Houston	9	7	0	.563	349	358
Indianapolis	7	8	0	.467	318	359
e-Jacksonville	3	12	0	.200	277	396
e-Tennessee	3	12	0	.200	284	417
North						
x-Baltimore	11	5	0	.688	483	351
x-Pittsburgh	10	6	0	.625	363	328
Cincinnati	8	8	0	.500	453	417
e-Cleveland	3	12	0	.200	245	380
West						
*-Kansas City	15	1	0	.938	385	288
x-L.A. Chargers	10	6	0	.625	368	281
Denver	9	7	0	.563	387	311
e-Las Vegas	3	12	0	.200	264	390

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Philadelphia	12	3	0	.800	402	283
Washington	10	5	0	.667	432	348
e-Dallas	7	8	0	.467	324	404
e-N.Y. Giants	2	13	0	.133	215	362
South						
Atlanta	8	7	0	.533	327	349
Tampa Bay	8	7	0	.533	427	352
e-New Orleans	5	10	0	.333	309	346
e-Carolina	4	11	0	.267	283	448
North						
x-Detroit	13	2	0	.867	493	299
x-Minnesota	13	2	0	.867	396	276
x-Green Bay	11	4	0	.733	413	287
e-Chicago	4	12	0	.250	286	348
West						
L.A. Rams	10	6	0	.625	342	356
Seattle	9	7	0	.563	345	343
e-Arizona	7	9	0	.438	353	355
e-San Francisco	6	9	0	.400	331	349

e-eliminated from playoffs | x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division | *-clinched home-field advantage

Burrow throws 3-yard TD pass to Higgins in OT as Bengals beat Broncos

PAGE 13

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Velasco, Barbo, Corotan, Valino place in age group

PAGE 15

Agape teams, Lily, Jordan jingle all the way to 1st

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The longest running event on Saipan—the Annual Christmas Island Relay—returned this year in its 43rd edition with 52 runners spread among the relay division and its newest division—the solo race—through the half-marathon 13.7-mile course.

The course ran through the Marianas Beach Resort parking lot, up to Marpi, then back and started just a little bit before the crack of dawn.

Agape Team 1 was the fastest on the course once again and flew through with lightning speed like Santa's reindeers on Christmas Day with a time of 1:14.50. The team was made up of student-athletes Jireh Wang, James Fan, Peter Peng, Raffy Cai, and Sablina Chen.

Team Santa 2024 was just a couple minutes behind at 1:16.54, and third place was Agape Team 2 at 1:25.21.

Wang said after the race that Team Santa 2024 gave them a run for their money as they were all fast, but they still pushed through to clinch first place. He said, "this year, we felt pressure because they were very fast, and we were also sick. But we pushed through because through the whole race, I was praying and hoping to win first place."

In the youth division, Agape Youth Team repeated as first place winners as well with a time of 1:21.43. The team was made up of Joseph Yang, Daniel Yang, Benny Li, Justin Yang, and Lucy Hong.

Second place were the youngest and smallest runners in the race—the Snow Leopards—with a time of 1:45.03.

In the solo division, overall first place was Dr. Lily Muldoon with a new course record

See AGAPE on Page 15

LEIGH GASES

Agape Team 1 sprints to first place again in the open relay division of the 43rd Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday at the Marianas Beach Resort parking lot.

LEIGH GASES

First place overall Dr. Lily Muldoon, right, poses for the camera as she and first place in the men's division, Jordan Ruiz, runs in Tanapag during the 43rd Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

LEIGH GASES

First leg runners of their relay division sprint out of the start/finish line of the 43rd Annual Christmas Island Relay at the Marianas Beach Resort last Saturday.

Run from 2024 Mile Race on Dec. 31

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

End the year on a high note with an early morning mile race in Run Saipan's Run from 2024 Mile Race on New Year's Eve this Tuesday.

Start time is at 6:30am next to the Saipan Shipping Co. and will go through the newly paved Industrial Road in front of the Gov. Eloy S. Inos Peace Park in Puerto Rico and ends right before the entrance to the Smiling Cove Marina.

Race divisions are the top open men and women, 14-and-under, 18-and-under, ages 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, and 60-and-up; along with a stroller/pram division.

LEIGH GASES

Jody O'Sullivan set the inaugural course record in the Run from '23 Mile Race on New Year's Eve from the new course that spanned the newly paved Industrial Road in front of the Gov. Eloy Inos Peace Park in Puerto Rico to the Smiling Cove Marina.

Chef Jody O'Sullivan and student-athlete Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez were the fastest during Run Saipan's Run from 2023 Mile Race.

O'Sullivan set the inaugural course record at breakneck speed of less than five minutes at 4:59, while Chavez ran a 5:56 mile for first place in the women's division.

To register, click https://raceroster.com/events/2024/83514/run-from-24-mile-race

Early bib pick up is today at the Cha Cafe 2nd floor from 4pm to 6:30pm.

Man Amigas bash Batties for softball champs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Man Amigas bashed the Batties in two straight games of the best-of-three championship series and were crowned the undefeated champions of the Inaugural NMI Softball Association Women's League 2024 last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Softball Field.

The Man Amigas showed no mercy just as the hot afternoon sun burned overhead and beat the Batties in two straight blowout games.

The first game was a blowout, 12-2, while the Man Amigas skyrocketed their runs, 29-2, in the second game to wrap it all up.

The Man Amigas rounded the bases like their life depended on it as they left Batties pitcher Jovie Omar rattled in both games.

Man Amigas' runs came flooding in early in the second game and it was clear they were going to sweep the series and claim the championship as the Batties failed to score in four straight innings.

The Man Amigas had a skyscraper of a lead, 13-0, by the end of the fourth, and they were gunning for more. However, Batties had some life left as they scored two runs in the last couple of innings, but it was too little too late as the Man Amigas continued their offensive onslaught.

By the end of the sixth, they scored eight more, then added another eight in the last inning to secure the championship.

The Man Amigas team consisted of the majority of the NMI Women's National Fastpitch Softball Team who competed in the 2024 Micronesian Games. The championship team included Jaylina Borja, Kianu Aldan, Bexx Repeki, Tal Obakrairur, Bell Igitol, Jahz Ramon, Heather Kladikm, Evita Maratita, Rosie Saralu, Keo Rios, Alannah Sablan, Jen Younis, Christy Aldan, and Rica Cruz.

In the individual awards, Kianu Aldan was named the regular season MVP, while Jaylina Borja was the finals MVP.

Aldan nearly swept up all the individual awards—most doubles, most triples, most homers, and most runs batted in. Meanwhile, Borja had the most singles and most runs scored.

The strikeout queen and pitching leader was Jovie Omar.

Manny Sablan, the team's manager, said after the awards ceremony that it felt great to win. He said, "a lot of the players have been playing softball… They all decided to form a team and they asked me to manage so we just practiced and improved their skills."

He said he's looking for-

See MAN on Page 15

LEIGH GASES

Champion Man Amigas players pose for a group photo during the awards ceremony of the Inaugural NMI Softball Association Women's League 2024 last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Softball Field.

LEIGH GASES

Runner-up Batties pitcher Jovie Omar, third right, poses with her pitching and strikeout leader awards with NMI Softball Association Women's League board members during the awards ceremony last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Softball Field.